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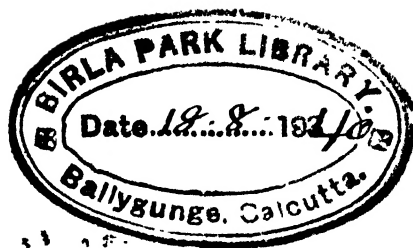
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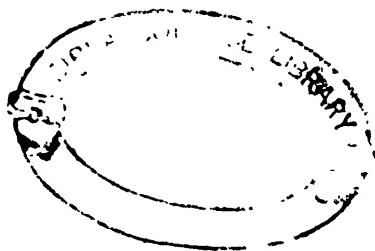
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The Indian Film

A REVIEW

BY

Y. A. FAZALBHOY

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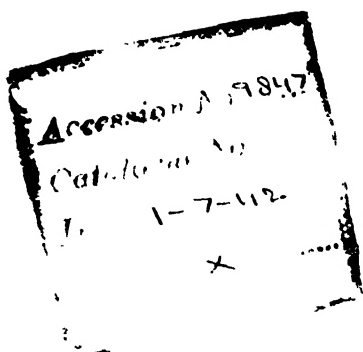
WITH A PREFACE

BY

S. SATYAMURTI, M.L.A. (Central)
*President, Indian Motion Picture Congress,
Bombay, May 1939.*

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FOREWORD

I am very glad to write this foreword to Mr. Y. A. Fazal-bhoy's book on the "Indian Film Industry and its Future". The author, who is quite familiar with the inside of the industry, its history, its growth, its possibilities, its difficulties and its future, has, within the few pages of this book, brought together all the problems facing the industry and has suggested practical solutions. He has rightly drawn the attention of the industry to the need for strengthening the Indian Motion Picture Congress. In these days, unless every industry organises itself, it will get no hearing from the public or the Government. The Indian film industry is already a big industry in the country, and it has a bigger future before it ; but that future cannot become its own, until and unless it organises itself, removes all the evils inside its organisation, and make its voice heard by the powers that be and by the public.

The author is very modest in his introduction and merely wants his conclusions to be examined with a view to building up the industry. But, on the whole, his conclusions are sound, and, one hopes, will be accepted by the industry.

He rightly draws attention to the lack of Government help to the industry and to the want of support from bankers, financiers and the general investing public. But, rightly enough, he also draws attention to the internal organisation of the industry. His conclusion on this matter is one with which many will agree. If the extremely small units of the present day succeed in expanding sufficiently, and if they ensure economic working, if they merge themselves into larger units, they can not only get sufficient financial support but also secure a certain important position in commercial matters and Government authorities will scarcely be able to ignore them. In succeeding chapters, the well-informed author discusses the questions of the organisation of production, the development of the art department, the technical

staff, and the very important problems of distribution and exhibition. He has some very practical suggestions to make on these matters, and also on the question of publicity expenses and of exhibition.

The author has done well in drawing the attention of the Government, the public, and the industry to the needs of the production of news reels and educational films. The industry by itself cannot meet these needs. Government must come to its help. He also deals with the Indian Motion Picture Congress, and its sectional conferences and their good work.

The book would have been incomplete, if it had not dealt with the question of foreign exploitation. The author suggests that producers should take steps to exploit the films they have already made, and send them to foreign lands. On the whole, the book is a very readable and useful contribution, and one hopes that the appeal of the author to all who are responsible for guiding the destinies of the film industry of India to learn a lesson from the past and to realise that their first duty is to organize their business before the outside help they are claiming can come to them, will meet with approval and response.

I hope that this book will find the circulation it deserves and will help to build up the Indian film industry, on a sound, permanent, and expanding basis.

S. SATYAMURTHI.

"Sundra",
Thyagarayanagar, Madras,
11th September 1939.

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INTRODUCTION

The Motion Picture Congress which met at Bombay in May 1939 gave a common platform to the Indian Film Industry. It enabled those connected with it to ventilate their grievances and make suggestions for future work. The delegates to the Congress and the various Conferences made a comprehensive review of the growth and present position of the Indian film trade which was of the greatest value. The resolutions passed mentioned a number of steps that should be taken to consolidate the position of the Industry. By their very nature, however, these had to deal with individual topics and the discussions which took place had to be of a cursory nature. But the proceedings served to arouse public interest in matters regarding Films and impressed on the country their present greatness and future possibilities not only as a profitable industry but also as a valuable aid to nation building in many directions.

The present is, therefore, a suitable time to make a detailed examination of the position of the Industry, which is, admittedly, not very satisfactory, and to suggest methods for its improvement. Many points have been raised in the succeeding pages which, I hope, will be seriously considered by everyone in this country interested in films. Even if some of my conclusions may not be accepted, I trust that they will prove useful as something to go upon in the task of building up our Industry.

Paradoxically enough, while films as a whole are growing in demand throughout India and more and more people are falling into the cinema-going habit, the producers of films, with a few notable exceptions, are permanently on the verge of a business breakdown. They can secure the necessary finance only at prohibitive cost and, working with practically no reserves,

face extinction if even a couple of pictures fail to find favour with the public.

In the following study account has been taken chiefly of two important aspects of the Film Industry. Its organisation, with particular reference to the lack of financial support, has been treated first. Undoubtedly, the figures relating to our Film Industry are impressive. But if we look at the vastness of our country and our huge population, and if we compare the development of the Indian Film Industry to that in England or America, our investments will be seen to be ridiculously small and our production under-capitalised.

The second aspect of our study is concerned with the internal difficulties which hamper the progress of the Industry. As we consider these difficulties attempts will be made to suggest possible solutions which, I trust, will result in better recognition of the Industry by the public and by those in authority.

I do not propose to go into the history of our Film Industry. This has been sufficiently well covered in the various periodicals dealing with the Industry and in numerous annual and other publications. My attempt is rather to analyse the present position and suggest lines for future work.

CHAPTER I

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

Any mention of the Film Industry immediately leads us to think of the producing studios. But contrary to public impression, the Film Industry is not confined to the enclosures of the studios at a dozen centres in the country. Substantial as these studios are, and great as is the investment in money, human labour and enterprise that they represent, our Film Industry is far greater. It is, no doubt, based on the producing studios. But it also includes the distributing firms, without whose enterprise and business acumen producers would find it difficult to market their products, as well as the thousand and odd cinema houses in the country which finally give to the public the entertainment that has now become a national necessity.

While entertainment is, no doubt, the chief aim of the Film Industry, it has also many other departments where other objects are more prominent. For instance, in so far as news reels are concerned, it takes the place of newspapers in a far more graphic way. Visual education by means of the cinema film is growing in importance year by year.

A large number of businesses like printing, lithography, manufacture of cosmetics, costumes, etc., also derive a substantial revenue from the Film Industry.

Indian Film Studios are not situated in a concentrated locality as is the case in England and America. Though Bombay takes pride of place in the matter of production, pictures are also made in cities like Kolhapur, Poona, Jubbulpore, Calcutta, Bezwada, Vizagapatam, Rajahmundry, Madras, Coimbatore and Salem. Delhi and Lahore were also centres of film production at one time but the studios operating in those cities

have now ceased to exist. These dozen or so centres of film production were humming with activity a few years ago when talkies first came to this country. The revolution brought about by the introduction of sound on film, which gave to the illiterate millions of India their first chance of following films through the medium of the spoken word, made the first talkies something like gold mines to their producers. Every qualified and unqualified man rushed into film production and over four hundred pictures were made in some of the earlier years. Very soon came a glut in the market and a number of studios and producing companies closed down because their products could not be sold profitably. The industry has not yet recovered from the depression that came in the train of these successive disasters.

The recurring failure of producing companies, that has been a feature of the Industry for the past few years, would not probably have occurred if it had been organised on more scientific principles and with better facilities for finance.

Looked at generally, the figures relating to the film industry in India appear very impressive. About 40,000 people derive their livelihood from it. Its total capital value has been estimated at more than Rs. 15 crores. An industry with such an amount of capital behind it can be expected to be in a position to defy all ordinary set-backs. But if we analyse these figures it will be found that Indian Film production is very much under-capitalised and that its strength in the face of disaster is almost a negative quantity.

So far as the producing houses are concerned, each studio can be roughly estimated to have a capital investment of about Rs. 2 lakhs, including machinery and equipment but excluding land and buildings. Therefore, the investment on all the studios in operation in India together can be taken as about Rs. 75 lakhs. Considering that the Denham Studios which

were put in England recently cost something like £500,000 it might be wondered how it is possible to run a studio on the meagre investment of Rs. 2 lakhs. But the fact remains that this is being done every day in India. The Indian producer is usually satisfied if he can take one picture in hand at a time and follow it up to its end through many months of hard labour. The economies in overhead expenditure that come from producing a number of pictures at a time have necessarily to be sacrificed.

As regards other departments, the distributing houses, which mostly supply the finance necessary for production, can be estimated to have a running investment of roughly about a crore and a half to two crores of rupees if we calculate the average rate of investment at Rs. 1 lakh for a picture for a production of about 175 pictures yearly. Of these two crores, about 25 per cent goes out to foreign countries as the cost of raw film while the balance is spent in the country.

The largest investment in the Film Industry is, however, on the part of the exhibitors as there are nearly 1,100 cinemas, the cost of each of which including lands, buildings, furniture and equipments, amounts, on the average, to nearly Rs. 1½ lakhs.

So much for the investment in the Industry. The returns are also divided between these various departments, though probably not in exact proportion to the investments made or the risks taken. While the producer stakes his all on the fate of his films, sometimes even on the fate of a single film, the Exhibitor and the Distributor are not in the same delicate situation. They survive if one or even a number of the films in which they are interested fail.

The Film Industry contributes to a substantial turnover of money, because, when a picture goes into circulation it covers practically every nook and corner of this sub-continent in the course of a few months. The

circulation of one picture brings in anything from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 5 lakhs, while the more successful pictures bring much more, though these are rare exceptions. The major share of this amount goes to the Exhibitor who has to pay for the installation and up-keep of the theatres. The distributing firms take a good slice of the income to meet their expenses and exploitation charges and the balance goes back to the producer as his share. The more successful a picture the greater the returns for the producer.

Apart from its value as a good method of investing funds, the Film Industry plays an important role in moulding the life of the people of the country. Its value as a potent means of propaganda has long been recognised throughout the world. That is why special efforts are made by every country in Europe and America to conserve its film industry even at a high cost to the nation's Exchequer.

In spite of the important place which the Film Industry holds and in spite of the prospects it has, its condition in this country is far from satisfactory. Instead of flourishing, and attracting capital and talent from all sides, it is at present badly organised and permanently in need of finance. No doubt, it has progressed in the past few years, but the progress has not been what we have a reason to expect. A fairly large number of pictures are now produced. But most of these are of questionable quality. The number of first class pictures in proportion to the total production has not risen. The critical sense and standard of judgment of the people is rising and the demand has been for more and more high quality pictures. If the industry is to have a bright future it must be able to cater for this demand without loss of time.

The discussions at the Motion Picture Congress centered mainly round two points, namely, lack of Government help to the Industry and the want of support from bankers, financiers and the general investing pub-

lic who are shy of giving support. These two factors are no doubt important. A third factor, however, is obviously the internal organisation of the Industry. If the leaders of the film trade stand together and organise themselves properly, there is no doubt that the investing public will come forward in their support and also that Government will be forced to afford all necessary protection and encouragement. If the extremely small units of the present day succeed in expanding sufficiently to ensure economic working or if they merge into larger units, they can not only get sufficient financial support, but also secure such an important voice in commercial matters that governmental authorities will scarcely be able to ignore them.

CHAPTER II

ORGANISATION OF PRODUCTION

In my opinion the main problem now before the Indian Film Industry is the production of a larger number of pictures of better quality in less time than is taken at present. No doubt, our producers desire to make high quality pictures and they know that there is a demand in the country for these, but they do not, except in very rare instances, and in the case of a few soundly established concerns, succeed in this attempt. In an article which I wrote for the "Madras Mail" in September 1938, in reply to a controversy that was going on at the time in local papers, I suggested the pooling of the technical resources of the various small studios in Madras into a few large combines so that they could work more economically and efficiently.

This remedy, which was suggested by me specifically in regard to South Indian Pictures, will apply equally well to pictures all over the country. As has been mentioned before, the total cost of the machinery and equipment of a studio in India is something like Rs. 2 lakhs, that is to say, the investment on all the Indian studios taken together will be about equal only to that of one of the major production organisations in Western countries. How badly Indian studios suffer from the smallness of their size can be understood if we take a look at their production methods. The average studio starts its career with one sound stage, one camera and one recording unit. Some of these install their own small laboratories with the minimum possible equipment. Everywhere the ruling motive is economy. The stage is usually equipped with the minimum possible number of incandescent lights, these being far less than as are seen in even secondary studios in foreign countries. Pioneers who started on this small scale succeeded in the early years because of the very novelty

of their attempt. Sound pictures were so new that whatever their quality, audiences flocked to them. Some of the early producers wisely utilized their profits in building up their position. They cleared their liabilities, bought more equipment, enlarged their studios, put up a larger number of sound stages and generally, while fortifying themselves against disaster, improved their capacity to give more and better pictures in a shorter time.

Except for these few, Indian film production still remains in the pioneer stage and even now new-comers in the line have the tendency to start very small units. Every publication concerned with the Film Industry speaks today of the troubles and the trials which it is experiencing. The years 1937, 1938 and 1939 have seen the closing down of many studios and film companies in almost all the producing centres. In my opinion, one of the main causes of these failures has been the starting of small units with restricted financial resources and bad technical facilities. The organisations set up on this diminutive scale did not have the essential departments organised as they should have been. If one or two pictures are unsuccessful, the studio gets into financial difficulties and either has to close down or further restrict itself by reducing expenses and carry on its work on a still more economical basis. This results only in the production of further low quality pictures which are bound to fail. A study of the better class studios shows that their success is due to their having greater production facilities and the making of a comparatively larger number of pictures. This has, in some cases, made it possible to set up organisations somewhat similar to what has been described here.

The slow and costly production of pictures that is always the case with Indian studios is the inevitable consequence of the small scale on which they operate and the insufficient resources with which they start. Since the average studio has only sufficient equipment

to deal with one setting at a time, it follows that simultaneous work is not possible on a number of scenes of one picture. Actors, actresses, technical staff and everyone else connected with production have to wait until one setting is removed and the next one erected. This is naturally a tedious process and the chief cause of the extremely high overhead expenses which Indian concerns, in spite of their small resources, have to bear.

In foreign studios, where there are a number of sound stages, and sufficient equipment to work half a dozen of these together, a number of scenes in the same picture go on at the same time and many pictures are under production simultaneously, the time taken in the production of each picture is reduced to the barest minimum, usually extending to not more than six weeks. While in one year a foreign studio of fair size is able to put out as many as 50 feature films, it is not uncommon in this country for a producing company to be satisfied with one or two pictures. So long as this practice is in force it is not possible to bring about any great economy. In film production, as in every other industry, large scale organisation means economy. The sooner Indian film producers realise the truth of this law, the sooner will they be in a position similar to that of their American colleagues.

Indian film production suffers from a vicious circle which must be broken if success is to be achieved. Most studios, as we have seen, have no facilities for shooting more than one scene in one picture at one time. Hence the preparatory stage of the picture is not organised. And without careful preparation it is not possible to take up work on more than one picture. At present our films, except in a very few cases, are started with the least possible amount of preparation. I have seen pictures going into production without even the entire dialogues being made ready. Rehearsals go on as the picture progresses and in many cases the actors,

and even the Directors, are not aware of how the roles are going to develop and in what way the story will finally end. Without full preparation of the story and all connected literary matters in advance, it will not be possible to start production economically even if the studio has sufficient equipments to stage a number of scenes at the same time. So even before the size of our studios is enlarged and more equipment installed, it is necessary to change our haphazard methods to something organised and well thought out as in America and in England.

The production of a film falls into two stages. The pre-production stage where the skeleton of the picture is worked out on paper and the actual shooting when this skeleton comes to life on the celluloid.

In a well organised studio the pre-production stage of a picture—often entirely absent in Indian studios—is as important as, if not more so than, the actual shooting. This stage consists in the selection of the story, development of the scenario, writing of the dialogues, composition of the music, preparation of the shooting script, selection of the Director, casting of the staff, rehearsals, designing of the costumes and finally the preparation of the schedule for the shooting of the picture. If all these are made fully ready the shooting of the film when actually it is taken in hand will go on with efficiency and regularity and will be completed in good time.

There are two or three important reasons which now stand in the way of the adoption of this intelligent and efficient method of work. Firstly, since few Indian studios aim to make more than three or four pictures yearly, it is considered unnecessary to go to any great pains to organise the pre-production stage of a picture. Directors probably feel that since they have enough time at their disposal, it is enough if they just start on the picture and allow it to develop almost as it pleases. In spite of these happy-go-lucky methods many good

and successful pictures have been produced, but, if proper care and thought had been given to the preparatory stage, many of the pictures that have turned out failures might probably have emerged successful.

Another important obstacle in the way of the executive who desires to organise his studio on these lines is the unwillingness of the Directors to submit to the discipline of an organisation which demands the details of their plans in advance. Many Directors refuse to discuss the dialogue, scenario or shooting script with the staff concerned, believing that these should be secret with themselves and should have nothing to do with other departments concerned with production. There is supposed to be such a lack of ideas in the Film Industry that there is a danger of rival companies copying ideas, dialogues, tunes of songs, the designs of setting, etc. Whilst there have been stray instances of ideas being copied or settings reproduced, I am not willing to admit that the general tendency amongst studios is to look out for ideas from their competitors. In picture making as in every other artistic calling, each Director is anxious to give expression to his own ideas rather than copy from somebody else. I am confident that if a serious attempt is made to set up a pre-production department in the studio, the advantages of the step will be so obvious and so great that Directors would very soon give up their objections. It has only to be remembered that well organised studios where things are prepared in advance, will be able to produce a much finer picture in a much shorter time than their competitors who may try to steal their ideas, to see how groundless this kind of objection really is.

The same reason, namely, the fear of the theft of ideas, stands in the way of proper rehearsals being given to actors and actresses.

Greater attention paid to a picture in the pre-production stage means a great deal of economy when the

final cost comes to be calculated. A week lost in the preparation of a picture is not so expensive as a week spent in having retakes and reshooting of scenes.

In the pre-production stage the first item on the programme is the selection of the story. After that comes the development of the scenario and writing of the dialogues.

Most Indian studios, however, follow a different system or rather adopt tactics which obviate the necessity of having any system at all. As soon as they select their Director they consider their work finished. Thereafter the Director has to do the thing himself ; he has to produce a story or select one, and he has to write the scenario which also serves as the shooting script. Instances are not uncommon where Directors have gone further. Often, when the credit titles are flashed on the screen we find that the story, direction, dialogues and even songs are all by the Director. The studio authorities are able to avoid a little bit of trouble by this method. But, however wide the range of man's capacity may be, it is not possible for any ordinary individual to handle all the different departments of film production equally well and produce a picture that will compare favourably with others where each department has been dealt with by a specialist.

Even in the matter of stories it is always better to invite outside authors to submit their work and select from among them. This will make for originality of ideas and avoid the tiresome repetition of theme and similarity of characters that is one of the worst characteristics of Indian films, which is in no small measure responsible for the lack of support that our pictures now encounter at the hands of the public.

In a studio with a good organisation as I visualise it, there would be a well staffed literary department, the business of which would primarily be the selection of stories. There are plenty of people in India, people

of standing and experience as writers, who would be only too glad to get an opportunity to write stories for the screen. The Literary Department would not find it very difficult to make a good selection from the stuff provided by these people. From among the stories selected by the Literary Department the Director would be offered a choice. Of course, if a Director has written a story himself or he fancies one written by somebody else, he could naturally get the first preference and it would be given to the Literary Department for careful study and preparation of the scenario.

But whatever the story, the first essential before it can go on the sets is its splitting up into a workable scenario. It is scarcely necessary to emphasise the importance of the story when we consider films. Many of the stories that have been filmed in recent years have been justly criticised for their miserable stories. In the issue of the "Indian Motion Picture Magazine" of June 1939, in an editorial entitled "The Film and the Author" there appears a strong criticism on the general policy of our producers to delegate the work of the author to the Director, a policy which results in indifferent stories. The writer says: "in India where screen play and scenario writing are primitive if not unknown, fully 72 per cent. of the stories during the past three years would be found to have failed miserably because the Directors, to the woe of the producers in arrogating the responsibilities of the authors, only concocted out of their own little brains absurdities that had to be called stories, and yet like the ostrich the producers and financiers have, time and again, buried their heads in sand when it came to giving the devil of an author his due".

The Literary Department should be in charge of an experienced author with suitable assistants who are also literary men. It would be up to them to train new aspirants to the honours of screen authorship to do their work efficiently and well. Criticism about the

neglect of the film trade in recognising the value of authors is a just one. Most of the failures of films in recent years can be ascribed to the thinness or bad presentation of stories, faults which were due primarily to the absence of the co-operation of experienced authors in their preparation.

Another direction in which the aid of expert literary men is wanted is in the research that should be undertaken whenever a picture relating to any particular period is filmed in order that the costumes, furniture, ornaments, etc., conform correctly to the times represented. If, in a story that is selected, the action begins twenty-five years ago and gradually develops into modern times, it is necessary that in the designing of the dresses, the selection of the settings and the decorations, care should be taken to see that there is a change in style as the years progress. Some months ago I had occasion to see a picture made by a leading company, in which the action was spread over one generation. Yet, when the film started, the opening scene of the picture, supposed to be at the beginning of the century, showed a setting of which the decoration was almost in advance of modern times whilst the style of the dresses was also equal to the most fashionable dresses of today. This kind of fault will be clearly avoidable if full preparation is made for the picture.

The importance of studying the scenario by the Art Department which is responsible for designing the costumes and the dresses is not realised by many studios. It is really necessary that whilst the scenario or shooting script is being prepared the Art Department is constantly consulted. When the shooting script of scenes is finally settled, a corresponding script should be prepared by the Art Department giving a list of places where action takes place and the relation of the action to the development of the story regarding time and other important factors. Some of our Directors are careful enough to prepare such instructions for

the Setting Department and the amount of detail that is necessary is really amazing. When it is realised that many stories come for production without the Art Department having this information, one cannot wonder that faults like this are mentioned so often in the criticisms of the pictures. There is no excuse for such technical faults appearing in modern times. Studio owners must realise the value of complete co-ordination between the various departments before a story goes into actual shooting.

It is the experience of the majority of readers that rehearsals are always undertaken when anything has to be staged. Even in our school and college days, when concerts and plays were to be produced a great deal of our leisure time was spent in rehearsals. Before the actual presentation of the programme a dress rehearsal took place where every little detail was rehearsed and last minute faults rectified. It is all the more amazing, therefore, that rehearsals are so sadly neglected in the making of a picture where thousands of rupees are spent. Rarely does a Director see that his actors know their parts complete from the beginning. Rehearsals, if at all undertaken, are gone through a few days before the shooting of a scene and then only of that particular scene. As is well known, in picture making, scenes do not follow in sequence as they appear in the picture.

If an action is filmed one day it is possible that the scene following may be taken a month later. For example a scene may show two people speaking angrily and then one of them walking out into the corridor and meeting somebody else coming in. The second scene in the corridor may be taken a month later than the first one inside the room. The tempo of the acting has to be maintained. When the corridor scene is taken it should not be forgotten that the actor has left the room in anger. Very often we have seen in such cases lack of continuity of action between the scenes in two different places. This is mainly due to the lack of rehear-

sals. The actor very rarely knows what will happen once he leaves the room. I have given a very common incident but there are many instances of continuity of action not being properly maintained which has weakened the acting value of the picture and resulted in failure to get public approval. Rehearsals, therefore, do not mean in my opinion the going over of a scene a day or two before the scene is actually photographed. They mean going through the entire action of the picture in complete detail as far as it is possible before the picture is taken up for production.

An important point worth noting is that even if there are rehearsals, they are only taken of the main actors while the minor characters are left out. Frequently in fact these are selected only a day or two before the actual shooting. Many times the fate of costly scenes depends upon the work of very minor characters and it is, therefore, essential to give them proper rehearsals.

Among the most important items of pre-production activities is that of selecting the cast. After the selection of the story and the Director, this is probably the most essential item. In consultation with the Literary Department must be prepared a list of characters and their characterisation. It is very necessary to write down the author's and the Director's notes of what the character will look like and what will be the impression it is desired to give to the public regarding each part. Because these notes are not made, very often an admirable story is filmed with the wrong type of actors in various roles. When the author visualises the hero as a happy-go-lucky young man who has no worries in life, the actor who is selected for the part turns out to be a serious-faced boy who looks old for his age and whose smile, instead of being bright and easy is unnatural and forced. Such defects are common in our casting. Sometimes the chief characters are rightly cast because the stories are specially written for them.

But characters of less importance often suffer. No importance is attached to casting the correct persons for the minor roles. This is mainly due once again to the lack of preparation of the scenario and the shooting script and other incidental details.

I have tried to emphasise repeatedly the importance of pre-production activities because the faults that appear in the picture are mainly due to the lack of organisation of this important part of picture making. If our studios are to improve the technique and quality of their pictures and meet the needs of an intelligent public and if they desire the industry to get out of the state of depression which it is now experiencing, then serious attention must be given to the question of setting up a proper and efficient Pre-production Department with a well organised Literary Department. And they must recognise the value and importance of authors in their establishment. The present tendency to entrust everything to the Director and attach no value to anything else must be changed.

CHAPTER III

THE ART DEPARTMENT

As important as the preparation of the story and the elaboration of the details necessary to be gone through previous to the shooting of the picture is the work in connection with the Art Department. It has already been mentioned that while the Director is busy on the scenario the Art Director should be equally so in respect of the work that he has to do in connection with the picture. He should make plans for every setting wanted for the picture and explain to the other departments his particular necessities. In studios in England and America it is the practice to prepare to a complete range of models of all settings which have to be made for the picture. If this practice could be adopted in this country also it would be a great help to the actors and also to the men engaged in the erection of the settings who can have an exact idea of what they are expected to do. The men in charge of the Art Department in many of our studios have proved themselves to be endowed with exceptional gifts and if they are given a free hand so far as their departments are concerned and encouraged to suggest original ideas, there is no doubt that the quality of our films will improve very greatly.

At present unfortunately the Art Departments of our studios suffer as much as any other Department from the general slipshod methods that prevail. The most common sign of this—obvious even in pictures supposed to be of high quality—is the improper arrangement of furniture and decorations in the settings. This is partly due to the extreme need for economy, to secure which it is often the practice to erect one large setting in which a number of scenes are taken. The same setting is often used with minor alterations

for entirely different pictures also. This leads, naturally enough, to staleness of effect and a family resemblance between productions turned out in the same studio. Settings are often erected from designs worked out at the last moment or trumped up by changing something or other in an existing setting. Pressed for time, furniture, curtains and other decorations are replaced in a hurry without any plan or thought. The staff in charge of the Property Department is often rushed off to the nearest furniture dealer to buy the essential things and they take things as they come without consideration of whether they are appropriate or not. I had once an occasion of witnessing of the shooting of a film in which there was a bedroom scene. There were two beds in the room which were supposed to be twin beds but those actually used were of different patterns. Apparently nobody had noticed the difference between the two and on this being pointed out, it was mentioned that no acting was going to be done on the bed which was merely a bit of decoration. The difference in the beds would not matter much as the public would not notice anything of the furniture as it would come very little in the photograph.

This attitude of indifference was commented upon by Mr. Panday in the course of his speech at the Film Lunch which was organised by the Indian Motion Picture Congress in Bombay sometime ago. I think he was perfectly right in saying that the greatest harm was being done by always remarking when faults were pointed out that "it would do". Sometimes this inattention to details reaches unbelievable dimensions. I remember, in one of the early Puranic pictures, a bicycle, leaning against the wall of a hut inhabited by Rishis in a scene laid a few thousand years ago. The greatest care is necessary in the selection and designing of settings and costumes. At present the slightest fault in these departments is noted and commented upon by the more intelligent among our film audiences. If our

pictures are to attract these more and more—and on this depends the prosperity of the Industry—it is urgently necessary that we should try to rid our productions of such silly mistakes.

Students of Art Schools and Colleges should be encouraged to join the Film Industry in the Art Department. Studio Executives must make it a policy to set up competent Art Departments in charge of well qualified persons. Where historical and mythological films are produced it is equally essential that persons who have a good knowledge of history and archaeology, or whose previous training will make it easy for them to acquire such knowledge, should be appointed. In every department of the studio there should be technically qualified persons in charge. The Film Industry needs qualified, educated and skilled workmen. It is essential that there should be as much originality in ideas and execution in the Art as in the Literary Department. Those in charge of the Art Department should not be judged by the quickness with which they can set up and pull down settings but also by the originality of their designs, which must be as different as possible for each picture turned out by studio.

CHAPTER IV

THE TECHNICAL STAFF

The technical staff in charge of photography and recording in our studios is quite efficient. But the common complaint is that the standard of work has not shown any marked improvement in the last three or four years except in rare cases. There has been a great deal of argument in favour of importing Cameramen and Recording Engineers from foreign countries. Looking to the progress already made, I am not in agreement with the view that it is necessary to import technicians from foreign countries. But greater facilities should be given in our studios for our Cameramen and Recordists to improve their technique. They should be encouraged to study foreign technical literature which is available at very little cost.

It would be advisable to maintain a Library of magazines and books connected with the technical side of the Film Industry in every studio. The staff should be encouraged to study this literature and carry out experiments as suggested by many of the authors of books on film technique. The best method of learning is to carry out actual experiment and for this purpose ample opportunity should be available in every studio. I have often found that our technicians, whenever they are off duty, prefer spending their time in doing nothing rather than improving themselves by the study of books or by experiments. Indian technicians have played a very great part in developing the Film Industry because they have trained themselves up by their own efforts and they really have, in several cases, produced results which can be compared favourably with the best done in England or in America where far greater facilities are available. But these are exceptions. The

general tendency is not to study for further improvement.

The Association of Cine Technicians of India has for one of its objects the holding of study classes and the exchange of ideas. This is a move in the right direction and I hope that the technical staff in various studios will be encouraged to join the Association. Until such time as we can persuade our Government to set up an Academy for the study of film art and science, I believe every studio should make efforts in the direction of maintaining libraries as just suggested and encouraging the technical staff to put into practice suggestions made in books and magazines.

Another difficulty experienced in the matter of efficient execution of work in studios is the indifference on the part of artistes. A majority of our actors will take their work seriously and have an interest in the part that they have to play provided they get the necessary encouragement from the Director who must take pains to rehearse the parts, explain the story to the actors and show how the entire picture depends upon good acting by everyone. Very often our Directors start a picture without this preparatory work which is reflected in the indifference of the actors, which is but natural. It is impossible for a person to keep up an interest for three or four months in anything unless he is encouraged and his enthusiasm kept up. A common cause of complaint is the lack of punctuality on the part of the actors and their tendency to keep away from the studios on slight grounds. Mr. Chandulal J. Shah, President of the Indian Artistes Conference held in Bombay in April 1939 gave some good advice to actors and actresses.

He remarked :—

“I know, that you are artistes, that you are sentimental. You are not like others. Yours is a special class in this trade. You are working always under heat

and light. There is strain and stress in your job. Yours is an avocation in which physical and mental strain is great ; and still I appeal to you that while thinking over your grievances, whatever you have got to say or ask for, whatever your legitimate rights, remember that the other side is also suffering from many hardships and is financially very weak still. Before you demand your rights, you have to see whether the producers have it in their power to give. That is why you are met here today. Everything is not good always on one side. There may be faults on your side also. Think of the co-operation that you should give the producers. Think of your sentimentality which sometimes plays havoc with the producers' resources."

I am of the opinion that many of the causes of complaint would disappear if the actors are taken more into confidence by the Directors. If everyone from the chief actor to the man or woman who plays the most minor role, knows the part he or she has to play and understands how it relates to the story, I am sure that there will be much greater enthusiasm and every desire to attend work punctually. It would be seen, therefore, that if there is proper co-operation between the technicians, artistes and setting staff, the work of the shooting of the picture can go on quite smoothly. Much of the time that is now lost is avoidable and the shooting of the average picture should not take more than two or two-and-a-half months. The setting up of an organisation capable of regular work on the lines I have suggested would be expensive and may not prove an economic proposition for a small studio. It is for this reason that I have been advocating the setting up of comparatively big studios by merging together three or four of the smaller units. I have explained in the beginning how production is divided into two main parts and how larger units conduce to greater economy.

Whilst the preparation work of one unit is going on, the shooting of another may be carried out in the

studio and if the former work is perfect, shooting can go on according to a fixed schedule without much difficulty. The advantages which would result in improved technique are so great that by following a policy of give and take the producers can work with efficiency and without fear of discontent.

CHAPTER V

PROBLEMS OF DISTRIBUTION

Other handicaps of our Film Industry, namely, those relating to the problems of distribution, the financing of production, the difficulties of the exhibition trade, etc. have also contributed to some extent to the failures of many film companies, and account for the difficulties that are faced at present.

The distribution of pictures and the financing of the productions is usually closely allied and it is necessary when studying the one to study also the other.

Films, like any other manufactured commodity produced for mass consumption, attain maximum success only if they are seen by the maximum number of possible spectators. They have to be sent from one end of the country to the other until the time arrives when they are no longer new to the cinema-goer in even the most obscure town or village which has the distinction of having a cinema hall. India now has 1,200 cinema outfits, including travelling shows. Of these, 200 show foreign pictures exclusively. The remaining 1,000 are open to exploitation for the benefit of Indian pictures. The problem may not appear to be very complicated since there are only a thousand possible customers. It pales into insignificance when compared to the position in America with its 14,000 cinemas and even to that in Britain with five times the number of halls we have. But with the fast increasing number of cinemas in this country, it is daily becoming more difficult.

Leaders of the industry at the recent Indian Motion Picture Congress wanted 10,000 more picture houses in the next ten years. Even if this is unattainable, trained observers anticipate that there will be some-

thing like 2,500 new cinema houses in this country within the next few years. Our Distributing Firms, which even now follow the methods which served the Industry in its earliest days, and then also in a most unsatisfactory way, have to revolutionise their outlook and improve the efficiency of their staffs far beyond the present stage if they are to be real servants of the public and the industry and to exploit the products of the latter to the satisfaction of the former and to the benefit of all concerned. Film Distribution has been put on a most scientific basis by the great concerns of Hollywood. There is no corner of the world, however remote, which escape their attention if it provides the least little market for their films. The possibilities of Afghanistan which boasts of but a single cinema hall are as carefully considered by them as those of Soviet Russia with its thirty thousand theatres.

The condition of the distribution trade in India is entirely different. Statistics are the main essential for scientific work in any line and particularly so in a business like Film Distribution. In the Indian Film Industry, however, no one seems to have thought of them except as troublesome figures the use of which should be avoided wherever possible. It is difficult to get an entirely correct list of cinemas in the country. Even if some firms have a complete list of names and addresses they have a tendency to keep it a secret out of fear that the results of their work will go to benefit their rivals in the trade. No figures have been compiled and published regarding the attendance at our cinemas. No one knows how many people see pictures in this country every week. And it is impossible to guess, in the absence of even the vaguest figures, the possible income class—as judged from the prices of tickets bought—to which cinema-goers belong. The film industry suffers a serious loss because of this. Advertising by means of films is growing in favour among manufacturers. And if the Film Industry could produce exact figures of

the people who would be likely to see advertising films in any given area in a given time and the possibilities of picture-goers as purchasers as judged from the class of seats they patronise, it is quite on the cards that many thousands of rupees would flow into the pockets of our producers, distributors and exhibitors from other manufacturers.

The absence of scientific methods shown by the sorry, almost non-existent state of our statistics is evident everywhere in our distribution trade where they are the most important. The inborn genius of a producer may overcome the lack of facilities at his command and enable him to produce a great picture. Any exhibitor with a little talent as a showman, with a small degree of commonsense which tells him that his success lies in pleasing his patrons, may be a success. But the Distributor, however brilliant he may be, is doomed to comparative failure so long as he is unable or unwilling to adopt modern methods. He should be able to judge the prospects of a picture not only on the whole, but particularly in every area where it is to be shown. He should study and find out the particular time at each centre when it will be most advantageous to release it.

It is conceivable for a film producer to decide to avoid the help of Distributors and undertake the exploitation of his pictures himself. In this case he has to have a great amount of capital which he should be in a position to lock up for a fairly long time, for the returns from a completed picture, even if it turns out to be a success, cannot come in for a considerable time after it is on the market. It may take anything from six to twelve months to recover even the amount spent in making the picture.

The chief characteristic of distribution in India is that to a great extent the firms handling the work are merely departments of financing houses. The Indian

Film Industry has always been in want of finance. In its early days it was even more difficult to get than at present. Since the returns from a picture will be recovered only after it is in the market for some time the studio must have sufficient funds to carry on its activities. The financiers who stepped in with this help took as security the returns from the picture and in the majority of cases retained the distribution with themselves. Many of them, however, had made no study of the science of picture distribution with the result that the exploitation of the film was inefficient and producers suffered in common with the other departments of the Industry, although to a greater extent than any of the others. If, unfortunately, the returns from a picture were not up to expectations, the financiers, forgetting their own inefficient methods, laid all the blame upon producers and made their terms for the financing of subsequent pictures more stringent than they were originally. Some companies did not suffer in this manner because the financiers either took care to engage competent people for the distribution and made a study of the business or gave the films for distribution to companies who were organised to do so on condition that the collections were to be paid first to themselves until their claims were met and then to the producer. But this policy was rarely followed. In the majority of cases the financiers became distributors.

Since their organisations were faulty it happened that they did not make sufficient efforts to exploit the picture thoroughly even if it turned out successful. They were satisfied if the collections equalled their advances and interest charges. Once these were recovered they did not worry about whether the producer got a good return or not. It was not rare in such cases, when pictures were exceptionally successful, for the financiers to so arrange matters that the major part of the profits were kept by themselves, leaving the producers no better off than they were.

In my experience of the organisation of the Indian Motion Picture Congress, the present unsatisfactory state of things in regard to the statistics of the Film Industry which should have been compiled by the distribution trade was borne in upon my mind with great emphasis. This branch of the film industry in India has yet to realise that the exploitation of a picture does not merely mean its being shown for a week or two at a cinema in a town. It means that the distributor should afford an opportunity to the producer to put the picture before as large a number of the public as possible, and more than once, if it is worthy to be seen twice or thrice. In such cities as Bombay and Calcutta pictures have to be shown in different localities in order to have complete coverage.

Unfortunately, most of our distributors, on account of their financial commitments, look only to the recovery of their advances and pay little attention to the pictures becoming really popular with the public.

Only in a few cases have our distributors made a thorough study of the circuits in which they operate. Rarely have we heard of an attempt by a distributor to bring the exhibitor and the producer into contact. In America and England distribution offices have a system of holding conventions to which they invite producers and all the exhibitors who show their pictures. Such meetings give valuable opportunities for the producer's programme for the coming season to be explained and methods of presenting pictures to be discussed.

This close association between the exhibitor and the producer creates a great deal of goodwill for the latter and also helps him to understand the former's point of view regarding the company's products. Only the exhibitor can say that he knows the public's mind, because it is to his establishment that they come to see the picture, and he is the best judge of their reactions. I do not know if Indian distributors make it a practice

to give periodic reports on their exploitation with special reference to public reactions towards particular pictures at different centres. It is the regular policy in foreign countries for producers to demand from the distributors such a report from every station with special reference to the pictures being shown in opposition by competing cinemas. This is an idea which should be copied by every producer and distributor here.

One of the great difficulties of the Indian producer is that the firms who are distributing his pictures lose their interest the moment the studio makes one or two bad pictures. It does not seem to be realised that no producer has an intention of making a box-office failure. If closer co-operation exists between the producer and distributor and through the distributor with the exhibitor, the difficulties of the former will be lessened. It will be realised by all that the first duty of the producer and the exhibitor is to build up a steady reputation for the concern and to see that this is maintained. By the holding of conventions and conferences it will be possible for the producer to know where his hold on the public is being lost and where his pictures are weak and in what directions he could improve them.

The fact that many producers, instead of distributing pictures through existing distribution arrangements, sell off exploitation rights to whosoever offers the highest amount, should be a warning to the distributors that their organisations do not command as much confidence as they should. If their arrangements were first class, no producer would be tempted to sell his pictures. Many producers are led to take this drastic step because they are generally in need of ready finance and hope to get a large sum immediately by outright sale. If good distribution arrangements were in existence, producers would begin to get their returns without undue delay if the pictures are even moderately good.

The granting of distribution rights by insisting upon a minimum guaranteed return by the distributor has been criticised because, sometimes, in the case of pictures that fail, the latter fails to realise the guaranteed amount. The producer's explanation of the minimum guarantee policy is that exploitation is unsatisfactory unless the distributor is forced to have an important stake in the picture. The only conclusion one can draw is that distributing organisations are not up to the mark so that the producer is compelled to adopt such means to safeguard his interests.

In the case of successful pictures the policy of having a minimum guarantee from the distributor does not favour the producer because the custom is that wherever a minimum guarantee is insisted upon, the distributor takes half of the amount realised in excess of the minimum guarantee. But even then many producers prefer to lose that half return over the minimum guarantee because the distributor works with enthusiasm first to recover the minimum guarantee and then 50 per cent of the excess return. If distribution is given on straight commission terms, even for exceptionally good pictures, many producers have complained that their distributors did not take very keen interest.

Obviously, therefore, firms in the distribution business must improve their methods of business before the system of minimum guarantee can be abolished. It should be abolished or modified because it is not in the interests of anyone, least of all the producers. The distributor who gives a minimum guarantee to the producer follows the policy of recovering this amount by insisting on a minimum guarantee from the exhibitors. When a bad picture is presented by the producer, there is a great hue and cry both from the exhibitor and the distributor and there is universal condemnation of the first because of his insistence on a minimum guarantee.

The amount of minimum guarantee is, however, not an impost made by the producer but is in reality the finance made available in advance for him to make his pictures. It is easy to realise from this how closely allied distribution and film production are. The abolition of the system of minimum guarantee without any other arrangement for finance being made would greatly hamper the studios. It is quite possible to do this. A suggested scheme is discussed in a succeeding chapter. If the producer is not financially committed to the distributor then it will be possible for him to exercise a much better control over the latter and also insist on his adopting certain definite business policies which will be of great benefit not only to himself but also the industry as a whole. Today the majority of the producers are more or less controlled by the distributing offices and to my mind this is chiefly responsible for the lack of enterprise shown by many of them.

CHAPTER VI

ROYALTIES AND MINIMUM GUARANTEES

A major part of the trouble to which the Indian Film Industry is now subject arises from the wrong methods of finance that are followed. It has no reason to be in any difficulty. If we look at the possible market and to the number of producers, even allowing for the small field available, which is further limited by difficulties of language, there is a demand for at least 200 films per year. And since the average Indian studio makes only about six pictures annually, there is a clear field for 30 to 35 producing units. All our existing studios, therefore, have sufficient prospect of business before them. But unfortunately many are in serious trouble brought about by mistakes in financing methods.

The prevailing practice seems to be for financiers to take away the maximum possible profits and make the producer bear the loss, if any. So, if a picture is extraordinarily successful and brings in many lakhs of rupees as profit, most of the advantage is reaped by financiers. On the other hand, if the picture works out at a loss the financier may conceivably lose something if he has given a minimum guarantee, but the producer gets all the blame. Financiers are wise enough to use the fact of one failure as a lever for getting more favourable terms from the producer for subsequent productions. This peculiar condition of affairs is due to historical reasons. In the early days when only very few recognised the possibilities of film production, people who were attracted to it were inspired by a pioneering spirit but they had little else to depend upon. Most of them were not even businessmen with training or aptitude for dealing with problems of finance or the administration of a large business. Film finance was

very difficult to come across and those financiers who ultimately came into the business were men who looked to the maximum security and the highest possible interest. On the ground that they were undertaking a serious risk since they would lose every pie if the picture was not completed, the financiers demanded very high rates of commission and royalties. The enthusiasm of the early people in the film business was so great and since they knew that the profits of a successful picture would also be enormous, the demands of the financiers were granted without question. But the high returns justifying the terms imposed by the financiers were available only from a very few pictures. The majority of Indian productions in the early days as well as at present do not by any means justify the rates of interest, commission and royalties usually paid. Taking the average, the returns from the film industry, as in most other industries, works out to a normal return on capital investment varying between 6 and 12 per cent. Since such a rate of return was incompatible with the 20 per cent and more paid to financiers, very few concerns were able to relieve themselves of the strain imposed by high interest rates, commissions and royalties. The producing companies, however good one or two of their pictures might have turned out to be, were in the long run bound to suffer seriously.

As a matter of fact, financiers in the Film Industry do not undergo any more serious risk than financiers in other industries. Very few technical men will leave a picture unfinished and even if a picture does not come up to the expectations of its producers and the public, it can still be made to pay profits if properly exploited.

There are many occasions when theatres are in difficulties to get pictures. They must show something or keep their houses closed. As the latter course is not to be thought of, they will at such times take any picture that is offered, good, bad or indifferent. A clever

distributor will make good use of a bad picture in such contingencies. The exhibitor will not complain because it provides him with a useful stopgap. The public will also not raise any serious objection as they have a chance of seeing a new picture instead of one that has probably run two or three times already in their locality. Since there are more than a thousand cinemas and only less than two hundred films are made yearly, every one of the latter, whatever its quality, should certainly have the chance of a fair run. It may not bring in a big profit but it will be rare if it does not pay for itself. Even a half week's run will go some way towards paying the producer for his labours. We often see pictures far below the average shown for half a week or so at houses showing foreign pictures. When we remember that these films have come all the way from Hollywood, we can have an idea of the thoroughness of the exploitation methods followed by foreign producers and distributors.

In the early days when film companies had exceptionally good returns on their productions, every cameraman, recording engineer or actor visualised the starting of his own producing unit. Each one of them argued that it was simply the excellence of the work turned out by himself and his companions that made pictures successful and enabled the company to make good profits. During this period one or two film companies had such tremendous success that they were able to pay off the financiers and stand on their own legs. But except for these, the strangle-hold of financiers on those who started at that time was so tight that few of them survived beyond the initial stages.

As I have just stated, a picture under production is not a bad security on which to advance money, because it is in the interest of all parties to see that it is completed. There is, however, the danger that advances made during production may not be recovered if the

picture when completed is seen to be technically defective or turns out to be a box-office failure. If the financier comes in after the picture is completed the risk is much less because he can judge the value of the film from the pre-release trial.

The correct method of finance for the Indian Film Industry would be for studios or film companies to start with enough finance to make two or three pictures without any outside aid. This is the first essential of the business. Therefore, if the suggestion I made for South Indian pictures is agreed to, i.e., if a number of producers pooled their resources together, made out a statement of their pictures and their returns, I am sure that they can start companies which would tempt even our conservative public to invest their moneys in share capital. For this purpose a Film Industry Bank, which people interested in films have long been asking Government to foster, will be of immense value. If Government were to start such a bank, its main duty would be to underwrite part of the capital in the flotation of new film producing concerns and thus to create confidence among the public. Studios and film companies with good previous reputation would then be able to secure enough finance without difficulty, sufficient to produce a few pictures at least.

Distributors can be appointed at this stage in various territories for exploiting productions. If statistics were available it would be easy to work out the maximum circuit of a picture, that is to say, the number of cinemas it will be shown for its first run, second run and third run. The average income per cinema should be calculated from previous experience. On that basis the distributors who take over pictures must be asked to guarantee a minimum amount for the producer. For example for a Hindi picture which can be exploited in all the territories of India, it will be found that about 150 cinemas will constitute the first run. If the picture is successful it will go through the same number of

cinemas in the second run. It will, therefore, be seen that it will pass through 300 cinemas in a short period even if it is not a very outstanding picture.

On the basis of a run through 300 cinemas, which is a very low figure for all India, if we take an average for the past three years, it will be seen that the returns from a picture vary between Rs. 1 lakh and Rs. 1½ lakhs. The average will thus come to Rs. 1¼ lakhs. The more successful pictures run through the circuit three or four times or even more, while an outstanding picture may have an even better run. But we are not concerned with outstanding pictures. If there is systematic distribution, by which I mean the exhibition of the picture at every possible cinema in the circuit for the first and second runs, (to secure which is the primary duty of the distributor) the returns will, on the average, be as above. If this amount of booking is done, the minimum guarantee amount can be advanced by the distributor to the producer without fear or difficulty. If the producer gets his production cost out of the minimum guarantee amount, he will be working on a very safe margin and whenever he makes a picture which is outstanding he will make a handsome profit. But even if he were to make only average pictures, still he can recover his cost and maintain his organisation on a good level. The system of minimum guarantee has been criticised very strongly but this is only because it has not been calculated on a proper scientific basis.

It is extremely unfair to ask the Distributor for a minimum guarantee when the studio concerned has no fixed programme of production and cannot undertake to give pictures to a regular schedule. The Distributor can get maximum bookings for his pictures only if he is in a position to supply regular programmes to his exhibitors for long periods. If the producer lets him down, his influence with the exhibitors will disappear and he will find it difficult to get as many bookings as he could otherwise have got.

CHAPTER VII

COLLECTIVE MINIMUM GUARANTEE

An alternative suggestion would be the working out of a scheme of collective minimum guarantee for a whole distribution contract. For example, a Company having a programme of, say, four pictures a year, should make distribution arrangements on the basis of a collective minimum guarantee for all the pictures to be exploited. The distribution areas are, as is well known, Bombay Presidency including Gujerat and Kathiawar and the Indian States ; Central Provinces and Central India ; Delhi, U. P., Punjab and N. W. F. P. ; Sind and Baluchistan; Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam and Burma; and Madras Presidency including the Nizam's Dominions, Mysore, Coorg, Travancore, Cochin and Ceylon.

For a Hindi picture, looking to the number of cinemas in the different circuits, the following basis of calculating the income in my opinion is fair :

| | | | |
|----------------------|----|----|-------|
| Bombay | .. | .. | 25% |
| C. P., C. I. | .. | .. | 10% |
| Northern India | \ | .. | 30% |
| Sind and Baluchistan | .. | .. | 10% |
| Bengal | .. | .. | 10% |
| Southern India | .. | .. | 15% |
| | | | <hr/> |
| | | | 100% |
| | | | <hr/> |

A producer should estimate his yearly expenses on the pictures he proposes to make. On the basis of the territories he should divide his yearly expenditure and the amount thus arrived at should be the minimum guarantee for that territory. For example, if a producer intends to make four pictures and proposes to spend Rs. 4 Lakhs in the year for producing these

pictures, for C.P., C.I. the minimum guarantee for all the four pictures will be 10%, namely Rs. 40,000/-. After the distributor has recovered Rs. 40,000/, subsequent profits would be shared in equal or other proportions between the distributor and the producer. If a producer were to make such arrangements he would be easily able, by means of this contract, to finance his productions but the risk is lessened as he should expect to make up the minimum guarantee from the profits of all the pictures. If one picture is a failure or even weak at the box-office, the loss on that picture is made up by some other pictures. The system of collective minimum guarantee is simpler and more advantageous to the distributor as well as to the producer. Naturally the method of payment of minimum guarantee should be such as to enable the producer to receive certain sums regularly as he delivers the pictures, thus enabling him to have a steady income to meet his monthly expenses. If, among his yearly productions he is able to have one or two outstanding successes, he will be able to make a decent profit for the year, and he will also be secure against any great loss. Naturally, the amount of the minimum guarantee and the budget should be fixed in consultation with the distributors.

With such an arrangement the problems of the distributor would be much lessened and the exhibitors could then be easily approached with a film contract for all the Company's pictures.

If a number of producers could pool their resources and work together as suggested by me, their combined organisation would be able to guarantee to the distributor enough pictures so that he could book the cinemas of a circuit for many months at a stretch or even for a whole year. The cinemas in return will get the security of an yearly contract and also have the satisfaction that they are booking the product of a Company which has a good staff and is a strong com-

bination of well known units, each of which has its own stars with their own fan circles.

If things are organised like this, bankers and financing syndicates would readily come forward to help the distributors to pay the advance and minimum guarantee to the producers where necessary. If there is systematic distribution and there is good control over the exploitation, it will be seen that the amounts advanced by the financiers are amply secured on the bookings made. As a matter of fact this policy is being followed by the most successful distributors, but they have managed to keep the producers under financial obligation to them, thus restricting their development and forcing on them a burden of interest and royalty which has affected the quality of their pictures.

The worry of meeting heavy payments of interest and royalty has really played a very great part in bringing about the present crisis in the film industry. If the producers have learnt any important lesson from the discussions at the recent Indian Motion Picture Congress, I should say it is the importance of working in co-operation amongst themselves. It will be seen that finance difficulties are not so great as are imagined. If only the producers put their house in order, work in organised co-operation, forget old jealousies and former differences of opinion, they could easily make themselves independent of the distributors and financiers. Instead, they could assume their rightful place in the Film Industry and have the final voice in distribution instead of, as now, the distributors having the final voice in everything. It is not, however, the producer's commitments to the distributors that alone stand in the way of his full success. He has to meet many other charges which also prove heavy burdens in many cases. Such items, for instance, as artistes' salary, publicity expenses and distribution commission are as important to the producers as are interest and royalty on advances.

CHAPTER VIII

ARTISTES & THEIR SALARIES

One of the major items of expenditure in film production is the salary cost of the acting staff. In production companies it is often felt that unduly high salaries are paid to the staff and some studios make it a regular policy to pay as little as possible. In my opinion those of the artistes who have a following, have a right of getting a good pay because much of the income from pictures in which they appear depends on the personal popularity of the "star". At the same time the star must also see that his popularity is maintained, not only by keeping up a high standard of private life but also by taking his work seriously and trying his best to do better in every picture. An actor who has a great public following is a definite asset to a studio because it can feel secure that its pictures will have a very good circulation on this account alone. At times the company which has taken over a star actor at a very high salary for a long contract finds itself in great difficulties if the star loses his popularity or does not take care to see that his work is of his usual standard. It is up to the "star" to see that such a state of things does not arise.

But because of a few such isolated incidents, I do not think it is fair that producers should carry on propaganda against the high salaries of the acting staff. Considering the fact that actors have to work with a great deal of concentration, and, during the periods of rehearsal and shooting, have to undergo a serious strain, I think the salaries paid now-a-days are adequate. There have been suggestions that producers should combine amongst themselves not to tempt away actors from competing companies by offering them higher remuneration. This will be detrimental to the

interests of the industry because it cannot thrive without competition. But the taking over of a company's actor by another company should be done in a fair manner and no undue influence should be exercised. It is possible to do such things without adopting any undesirable tactics. The artistes themselves are the best judges of their own interests and they should make a change only for very substantial reasons. Examples are not lacking of actors who have left big companies at the start of a promising career to join smaller and newly established units on higher salaries. If the companies become unsuccessful, very often the high salaries promised turn out to be merely a hope. If this happens, the artiste has only himself or herself to blame. Any person will see first to security of employment rather than a high salary which may or may not be paid. A company of standing can give an employee service of many years with regularity of payment and many other benefits.

In the case of a film "star", publicity is the most essential element of success. Often artistes who have shot up because of the good publicity of major studios, get the wrong impression that the public homage they receive is due to their own personalities and discover their mistake too late when they sink into oblivion on joining small units which are unable to give them enough publicity.

Salaries of members of the acting staff vary from Rs. 150/- to Rs. 4,000/- or 5,000/- a month. The higher levels are reached only by those whose pictures bring in an income of Rs. 2 or 3 lakhs. It will be seen that of this big total only a very small percentage is paid to the actor who is also responsible for the returns. It would probably be advisable to devise a system by which a popular star could cash in on his hold on the public without the producer being taxed to an undue extent by having to pay extremely high salaries. The producer will be hard hit if the star's salary is fixed at

Rs. 5,000/- or Rs. 6,000/ a month and his pictures do not bring in the expected returns. This may happen on account of one of many reasons. Indifferent acting may turn the public away from a star or unpopular behaviour in public or private may create prejudice. No one can object to an arrangement by which a star is paid something like a bonus on a good picture, based on the returns that are received. If the picture is not up to the mark this will not, of course, be paid.

An important resolution passed at the Cine Artistes' Conference in Bombay at the time of the Indian Motion Picture Congress recommended to the producers that they should add in their artistes' contract a clause that the latter should maintain themselves in the fittest condition relative to the respective effects with the types of roles they are called upon to play. It was really encouraging to find such a demand coming from the artistes themselves and this really proves what I have always claimed, that the artistes take a very keen interest in their pictures. Their interest will be more and they will get encouraged if their roles are explained and they are given an idea of the story, of the part they have to play, etc. Their enthusiasm can be utilised by giving them a true conception as to how they have to appear before the public, and thus enabling them to form a clear idea in their own minds about the nature of their roles. In discussing pre-production activities in our studios this point was dealt with and although it may seem unnecessary to repeat it here, it is such an important matter that producers and Directors should consider it in its true light. It will be admitted that good acting is a criterion of a good picture and, therefore, it is necessary to adequately pay the staff for their services. The present scale of salaries is a reasonable one and within these limits and with full co-operation between the company and the acting staff, no undue burden would come upon the former.

CHAPTER IX

DISTRIBUTION COMMISSION

Although actors' salaries are not too heavy a burden on the producer, distribution commission takes away a great share of his expected profits. Unlike all other branches of the Film Industry, distributors are the one people who work with absolute safety. Whether a picture is good or bad, success or failure, they get a commission on the turnover. Many producers have failed in the past few years and many studios have closed down, and because they have been deprived of employment, Directors and artistes also have suffered as much as any others, but distributors have flourished not only in recent years, but throughout Indian film history. They work with the absolute knowledge that their commission is certain on every rupee a producer's picture brings in.

Some of the problems relating to the distribution of Indian pictures have been touched upon in the earlier pages. But the subject is so important, the distributor is so vital an element in the organisation of the Film Industry and his influence is so far reaching that it is necessary to devote more attention to his business methods as they affect the industry.

No one can deny that the industry is perfectly justified in demanding from the distributor more attention and better service than he has given to it in the past. To take the barest minimum, if 150 pictures are made every year and the average income from every picture after the theatre has taken its share is Rs. 1,25,000|-, the total yearly turnover works out to Rs. 1,87,50,000 or say about 2 crores in round figures. This is a normal figure for the industry. There are many pictures which give returns far above this and very few which bring in less. The average cannot be

much above or below. Distribution commission is charged at 15 to 20 per cent. Therefore, if we take 15 per cent on the income from 150 pictures we arrive at the huge figure of Rs. 30 lakhs as the amount paid every year by the Film Industry to the distributor.

Actually, however, the amount earned by the distribution is far higher as, in the case of pictures where he has given a minimum guarantee he returns to the producer only half of the amount realised over and above the guaranteed figure. In the boom years of the Film Industry 300 to 400 pictures were made every year and the Distributors' profits at that time must have been correspondingly high, probably about Rs. 50 to Rs. 60 lakhs a year.

What have the distributors given, what are they giving now, in return for this fine avenue for profitable investment that the Film Industry has opened out to them? The avenue has been so good that financiers with an eye to quick returns and high rates of interest were the first to be attracted to the Film Industry.

I trust I will not be misjudged if I say that the return the distributors and financiers have made to the industry has not been commensurate with what they have derived from it. Their service in the matter of the exploitation of pictures leaves much to be desired. They do not maintain any statistics worth the name and what they do is done by rule of thumb methods which are far from being as effective as modern scientific exploitation such as is done for American and British pictures.

The risk that the distributor takes is, as has been pointed out in earlier pages, practically nil. Very rarely does he stand to lose anything on the minimum he guarantees to the producer. And what he loses on one picture that fails is more than made up in another that is average where he takes the lion's share of the profits.

Unlike the producer who has to maintain a huge establishment with highly paid actors, actresses, technicians, etc. the distributor's expenses are the minimum. So-called distribution expenses mostly come from other sources. Indian distribution offices, in the majority of cases, are models of economy. In many offices, there is only a clerk in charge of the booking, a godown keeper, a despatch clerk and an accountant. Two or three travelling representatives are maintained to go with copies of the picture when it is feared that proper returns are not coming from the theatres. Beyond this the only expenses are of rent, postage and telegrams and stationery. Publicity expenses are ordinarily paid by the producer. Representatives' travelling expenses are paid by the Exhibitor. To the latter is also charged all despatching costs. These charges are made in such a way that they cover at least some part of the salary expenses also.

As against this minimum of risk and minimum of expenditure, the distributor, it must be said to the credit of his business acumen, nets the largest possible proportion of profits, far larger than that of the producer. There have been scarcely any instances in the history of the Indian Film Industry of the failure of distribution firms while the failure of producers has been so common as to attract little notice.

This state of things is rather unfortunate as the distributor-cum-financier has been the prime factor in the Indian Film Industry and, if only he utilises his opportunities suitably he can not only remain so but play a great and glorious part in what is certain to be one of India's key industries. If he is to do this, he must change the point of view from which he has so far regarded the industry.

In the wider interests of the industry and all those who depend on it, our financiers must give up the policy they have followed so far of encouraging the setting up of diminutive producing units. No doubt these are

the easiest to set up. But sooner or later they are bound to go under. And while they are in existence, however capable may be those in charge of them, they are bound hand and foot to the financiers. If the latter have put up the money for the erection of the studios, they claim heavy royalties. Even otherwise the system of minimum guarantees enables them to net the best part of the money brought in by the sweat of the producer and his staff.

If our producers were economically in a stronger position *vis-a-vis* the distributors, it would be very easy for them to assert their rightful position. It is they who give to the financier and the distributor the assets worth lakhs of rupees which the latter trade upon.

Whilst much has been written about the financial difficulties of the producers and the high rates of interest they have been obliged to pay, I believe, it has not been clearly realised how the industry has been forced into such a state. Technicians, even those who are very clever at their work, have to depend on borrowed capital when they set up their own producing units and have to go early into the hands of financiers. The latter not only keep the security of the studio and the pictures but also take over the distribution rights of the Company's productions. For distribution they get their usual commission ; for advances they take interest and for helping in the establishment of the studio they have royalties. So long as the producer remains in their financial grip they are secure in respect of their capital and interest and it is, therefore, in their interest to see that returns from pictures are not so excessive as to enable the producer to pay them off. There is, therefore, no incentive to intensive exploitation.

The situation will improve only when producers realise that their interests lie in joint action and adopt a common policy which will enable them to get all the finances they need at reasonable rates. It is only then that this side of the Film Industry can be put on a more

businesslike footing. In my opinion, it would be in the interests of the producers to promote distribution companies. It will be found that finance will be easily available to work such organisations once it is known that the productions of two or three companies are reserved for it exclusively.

The success of the United Artistes' Corporation of America is worthy of note by our producers. The President of United Artistes is a leading banker who can speak with authority on Film finance. A properly organised Distribution Company can contribute very greatly to the establishment of successful companies and to raising the standard of production. Such a distributing organisation must work with the policy that it is responsible to the producers and under obligation to them to see that their pictures are exploited to the fullest possible extent.

The giving of advances by the distributing organisation to the producer should not be considered anything abnormal or out of the ordinary. This should be accepted as one of the normal activities of the distributor. He must give up the policy of trying first of all to recover the money he has advanced in order to advance it at higher rates of interest to some other producer.

The difficulties of the Film Industry cannot be got over simply by asking for finance on easy terms or by aid from Government. The industry cannot obtain finance on easy terms unless it organises itself well. Production and distribution methods need a thorough overhaul. For one thing, the Distribution commission can very safely be cut down to 10 per cent. If it is more than this, it will always remain a burden on the industry.

Advances given before exploitation is complete should be between 50 and 75 per cent of the average amount to be realised in the circulation. The producers

starting with adequate capital and knowing that on the completion of a picture they will receive 50 per cent to 75 per cent of the average income from a picture of similar standard can maintain themselves and their organisations on a businesslike basis. The production and distribution branches of the industry must co-operate more closely than they do now, without which there cannot be much of an advance on present standards.

CHAPTER X

PUBLICITY EXPENSES

Equal to the burden of distribution commission is the expenditure on publicity incurred by Indian film producers. The past few years have witnessed something like a race among prominent producing concerns for the honour of being recognised as the premier institution in the country and amidst the din of the ballyhoo campaigns which they initiated, the economic value of advertising has been almost lost sight of. Almost every other picture has been claimed to be the "best ever produced" and equal to the finest productions of Hollywood or Elstree and these claims, however unfounded on the merits of the pictures, have been backed up by newspaper advertising campaigns of tremendous intensity.

A publicity budget of Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 25,000 is quite usual for a picture of no extraordinary merit. It is being felt that such figures are too high but producers are afraid to reduce the allotment. The public, they say, have become accustomed to big advertising campaigns and if a picture is not heralded by a terrific burst of publicity it is likely to be put down as third rate as those responsible for it do not apparently care to push it well. This is not a correct argument. It is quite possible to secure effective publicity for a picture at much less expense, provided modern methods are adopted and pursued with determination. If one producer with imagination and courage adopts newer and more scientific methods, which are at the same time much cheaper than the pointless system now followed, others are sure to follow.

Before going into the details of policy and methods let us consider what are the chief items of expenditure under the head of publicity. These are :—

(a) Photographs of important scenes which are reproduced in magazines and daily papers or shown in theatre lobbies.

(b) Blocks in line, black and white half tone, and in two and three colours which are supplied to newspapers and are also used for advertising purposes.

(c) Designing and printing of posters.

(d) Tax on displaying posters in streets. This is very heavy in Bombay where the producer has to bear it. In other centres the display of posters falls naturally to the lot of the exhibitor.

(e) Printing of handbills, booklets, heralds, exploitation sheets, etc.

(f) Designing and making of slides for cinema exhibition.

(g) Preparation of trailers to introduce productions to cinema audiences.

(h) Art work in connection with advertisements, i.e. preparation of designs, etc.

(i) Cost of newspaper and magazine space. (This is one of the heaviest items and often outweighs all the others put together).

(j) Theatre decoration. Most producers undertake theatre decoration work in the case of the premiere release. But they also often supply painted screens, cutouts and other pieces to upcountry exhibitors.

(k) Stunt advertising. This word is used for want of a better one and is meant to include such activities as street processions and so on which remind the public about the picture.

Some money has to be spent on each of the above items as they all have a part to play in the successful presentation of a picture. But in common with other departments of our Film Industry our publicity men

also often follow haphazard methods which result in unnecessary, unbalanced and uneconomic expenditure which fails to achieve the purpose of getting the best and widest possible advertisement for our productions.

The expenditure incurred by most Indian studios on some of the above items is too little while that on others is too large. For instance many of our producers economise on still photographs. Fifty or sixty of these are considered sufficient while actually they are far from being so. The Publicity Department people can do a far better job than they do now if they can make a selection from some hundreds, instead of from a few dozens, of photographs. This object can be achieved without any great expense if larger use is made of small size but powerful "candid" cameras. The miniature prints from these can be filed and whenever wanted, any required print can be developed.

Film companies are, most probably, the best customers of block making establishments as, on an average about 200 to 300 blocks—and sometimes even more—are made for every picture. A good deal of money can be saved under this head if greater use is made of stereos which cost only about 25 per cent of what original blocks in line or half tone cost. In this country a large number of newspapers—particularly those in the vernaculars—are printed on very coarse paper which does not allow of good reproduction from half tone blocks. In Urdu papers, which are all printed by the old fashioned litho process, half tone blocks are almost absolutely useless. A good deal of economy can be secured with increased effectiveness if more importance is attached to the copying of photographs in line drawings and their reproduction by means of line blocks and stereos which can be used even in Urdu newspapers.

Posters are usually prepared in three or four sizes for every film. At smaller centres of exhibition, how-

ever, they are sometimes conspicuous by their absence. If these exhibitors are encouraged to use them more liberally there is bound to be a definite increase in attendance figures.

The printing of advertising material, including synopsis books giving the story, songs, etc. of the picture is a heavy item in the publicity budget of a good picture, accounting for about Rs. 5,000 on the average. This amount would seem to be irreducible unless the studio concerned, or a few studios together, install their own printing press when it can be brought considerably lower.

Though Publicity Departments are attached to every studio, their personnel never, or but very rarely, includes a commercial artist experienced in the preparation of newspaper and magazine advertisements. The tradition among Indian cinema publicity men seems to be that film advertisements should always, or as far as possible, be type set and should depend for their effect on superlatives that are heaped on by mountain loads. This involves the use of far greater space than would be necessary if advertisements were designed by men experienced in the line. It is no exaggeration to say that the same effect, the same prominence, that they now have, can be secured for cinema advertisements if they are well designed, in about a quarter of the space that they now occupy.

Unfortunately for our Film Industry, advertising in newspapers and periodicals has assumed unreasonable proportions. No doubt this form of publicity is the most important. For films as for other products, newspaper advertising has a value far beyond its actual capacity to bring patrons into theatres. It creates public opinion. It sets people talking, and word of mouth publicity is by far the most important in a largely illiterate country like India. Newspapers in metropolitan centres penetrate every town and village where there is a cinema hall and advertisements and reviews in their

columns enable the mofussil cinema-goer to look forward to his films with intelligent anticipation.

But this does not mean that newspaper space should be wastefully used and there is no doubt that at present more of it is taken by film producers than is necessary. In the marketing of other products, say soap or toiletries or foods, even when there is an advertising allotment of Rs. 1 lakh, the buying of even an inch of space in even the smallest newspaper is carefully considered from every possible point of view.

In the case of the release of a film, more often than not, the Publicity Department of the studio resembles the scene of a village feast where everyone is a guest and everyone has a right to get himself fed. It is a common practice for the less responsible film journals to put large advertisements without permission hoping to collect something later on.

Let us consider the classes of publications which it is the practice to use for film advertisements.

There are, first of all, the English language newspapers, daily as well as weekly. These are the most important not only from the point of view of absolute circulation (in which matter they have a large lead over the vernacular press not only in Bombay but in other important centres like Calcutta, Madras, Delhi, Lahore and Karachi), but also in respect of moral influence. The opinion of the average English daily carries far more weight than that of its vernacular counterpart. Advertisements in English papers have another advantage in that they are, in the vast majority of cases, not confined to one province. An advertisement in an English newspaper in Bombay is read equally in Ahmedabad and Sholapur, in Baroda and Nagpur.

Since the circulations of English newspapers are high, their advertising space is naturally costly. So, while space should be taken in them, it should be done only after careful consideration, and when taken, it

should be used with the greatest care so that the fullest possible value is derived from it. Small, well-illustrated advertisements will, while reducing cost, attract more attention than the costly large, ragged typeset displays that are in favour at present.

The vernacular press is equally as important as the English and the problem of dealing with it is far more complicated. In Bombay for instance, preparations have to be made to advertise in three important vernaculars, namely, Gujerathi, Marathi and Urdu, each of which has a very vigorous press. And each one is so important that there is no question of ignoring it. The only way to reduce cost would seem to be that suggested above, to concentrate on better designing and better illustration and to rely for effect on these rather than on liberal display of empty white margins and the use of unnecessary superlatives.

In considering advertising allotment, it must be considered that the newspaper-reading habit is spreading every day in this country. The circulation of every paper, in whatever language it is published is increasing fast. Circulation figures of even five years ago are considered ridiculously small now-a-days. And if a larger proportion of the intelligent, thinking classes which read newspapers come to the support of Indian Films, the standard of our productions will surely improve on account of their criticisms.

The bugbear of Indian film publicity is, however, a large and very vociferous group of periodicals which devotes itself entirely to the Film Industry. There are a number of well established papers in many languages which have rendered great services to the Industry. But round this core of old stalwarts, who are given the respect due to them, has grown up a number of far less respectable publications which give little worthwhile stuff to their readers and rely on advertisements from film producers which they consider as their birthright. They disdain to discuss such matters as circulation

figures which worry other publishers and openly demand advertisements because they "render service by means of their criticisms". Film Journalism of this type is, to put it shortly, what would be described as a "racket" in America.

Yet, fully aware as they are of all these facts, our Film Trade pays great attention to the views of this press. If any film magazine happens to criticise a producer adversely, he often goes to the length of increasing the advertising quota for it. This accommodating—rather, cowardly—tendency on the part of producers has attracted a large number of people to the cinema magazine trade who otherwise would not have been able to make a living in any other business. Their ingenuity has been able to instil such a sense of fear and such an inferiority complex in the minds of the producers that they are humoured at any cost.

The Conferences of Artistes, Technicians, Exhibitors and Distributors held along with the Indian Motion Picture Congress, all passed resolutions condemning such journalism and urging on the journalists themselves to take up the work of weeding out the undesirables from their ranks.

It is far from my mind to discourage journalistic interest in the Film Industry. It is the first essential for the popularisation of the cinema habit. What I am against is the irresponsible type of journalism that draws to itself a large amount of money by methods not very different from blackmail. It is necessary for the betterment of the trade that it should recognise only such papers as are useful to the Industry on account of their standing with the public and their literary and artistic value.

It is the right of the public to know the views of competent critics on the value of a picture. It is good for the Cinema Trade to know the reaction of the public to their productions. If the picture is bad it must be

mentioned. But as Mr. K. Natarajan remarked in the course of his inaugural address at the Indian Film Journalists' Conference, criticism in the true sense is more an appreciation than merely disapproval of the subject criticised. The Indian Film critic of the more irresponsible type, however, devotes his greatest attention to finding out even the smallest defects and placing them prominently before the public to the exclusion of the many really excellent qualities which the picture may have. Over and above this, many journals try to make a reputation by personal attacks on all and sundry connected with the Film Industry and by the revelation, real or fictitious, of the details of their private lives.

The Indian Film Journalists' Conference which met along with the Indian Motion Picture Congress had an excellent opportunity of making an effort to improve the standard of film journals. Unfortunately, however, instead of doing anything in this direction, the Conference contented itself mostly with criticising the Industry in general and offering advice which was superfluous. While a comprehensive resolution on film Journalism was passed, no effort was made to set up an organisation to control the activities of undesirable journals.

What is the way out of the present impasse ? How can the heavy expenditure on newspaper and magazine advertising be reduced ? Some time ago the Indian Motion Picture Producers' Association of Bombay laid down rules regarding the allotment of space to newspapers and periodicals by producers. These rules, however, have been honoured more in the breach than in the observance. Advertising, it was probably not realised, is a subject where such hard and fast rules cannot be applied.

There are other and far more effective ways to reduce expenditure. But first of all, our producers must get rid of their imitation complex which leads them to

do exactly what the other man does. If one producer takes a full page advertisement in all dailies on the release day of his picture, it is surely no reason why another should do so for a picture that is probably quite different in type and appeal. We do not find manufacturers in other lines, say, soap or cigarettes, making up their advertisement budgets by what their competitors are doing.

As has been mentioned already, heavy savings can be made by the use of much smaller space and at the same time much more effect can be secured if newspaper advertisements are specially designed and illustrated.

A good deal can also be saved if support is withdrawn from all except two or three among the cinema journals. It is in the interests of the producer to spread news about his productions primarily among the Distributors and Exhibitors, both of whom together do not number more than 1,500 at the most. For those who are working on a large enough scale, it will be an economical proposition to publish a house organ to be distributed free among Distributors and Exhibitors and supplied for payment to those of the public who may be interested. Issues appearing at the time of the release of particular pictures may be printed in much larger numbers and distributed at theatre doors freely. A weekly paper subsidised by interested producers and freely distributed might be another means of good publicity at low cost.

Each of the Foreign Film concerns operating in this country publishes a small magazine of this type. They have, in addition, cut down their advertising in daily and other papers to a large extent with no appreciable bad effect.

In the language of journalism, the Film Industry is news. If only our producers would realise the full significance of this fact, they could avoid much expense.

If they employ capable journalists in their Publicity Departments who can make up printable items of news about the studio and stars, papers would be only too glad to publish them. When no picture is about to be released or actually showing, the Publicity Departments of our Film Studios are now silent as they are accustomed to speak only through paid advertisements. This dull period should be utilised to keep the studio and the stars constantly before the public by means of interesting news items. If this is done paid advertising at the time of release could be much less than it is now.

It should be the duty of the Publicity Department to develop the star value of the actors and actresses so that when a picture is released, the mere mention that so and so has an important part in it will bring people to the theatre.

Some of the money saved by the methods suggested above could be spent to attract the classes who are not influenced by advertising, the illiterate millions who do not read newspapers or magazines. There is considerable scope for the improvement of street publicity and theatre decoration which are now often done in a very crude fashion.

Illiterate people cannot read, but they appreciate and understand pictures. If more attention were given to pictorial publicity I am sure there would be good response. Coloured pictures of stars if manufactured on a large scale would be extremely cheap and are never thrown away. There is a fortune awaiting the producer who is wise enough to get likenesses of his chief actors and actresses on the counter of the Bidi shop and on the walls of the cheap tea shop.

One of the handicaps of the Film Industry, in my opinion, is the lack of special publicity consultants. Picture publicity, like all advertising, is a scientific business and it is in the interests of the Film Industry itself that it encourages the setting up of special offices which

are entirely devoted to this work. Today much of the publicity is done direct from the studios themselves under the control of a Publicity Manager who has one or two assistants to prepare the write-ups. These small advertisement departments are hardly competent to undertake and supervise the huge expenditure which is incurred by the studios. The amount spent in the various kinds of publicity on every picture varies from Rs. 20 to Rs. 25 thousand. It will be seen, therefore, that for the 150 to 200 pictures made in India a very large sum is spent. If this could be controlled, then it would be found that advertisement experts would be attracted to specially organise themselves for the cinema trade. The trade, therefore, should encourage the starting of special companies devoted to cine publicity with branches in different important centres whereby they can obtain a much better circulation and exploitation of their picture. It may be right to mention here that distributors who are very often given the responsibility of doing publicity in their circuit should be made to support such organisations and to take advantage of their services. It may well be advisable for the trade to take away the responsibility of publicity from the distributors, very few of whom in any case do the publicity in a good manner, and entrust it exclusively to such expert organisations.

While on this topic it may be mentioned that there is little justification for the prevailing practice of the producer supplying publicity material free to the Distributor and of the latter selling it to the Exhibitor at a stiff price. It will be more equitable if the Distributor and through him the Exhibitor, get their publicity material at cost price from the producer.

The contracts which foreign Distributing Companies enter into with their Exhibitors always contain a clause laying down that suitable publicity should be given to the pictures. It might be advisable to have some such arrangement in regard to Indian pictures also.

CHAPTER XI

THE EXHIBITORS

Cinema theatres occupy more or less the same position, in relation to the Film Industry, as do retail shops to other manufactures. They sell the products of the Film Industry to the public. But they sell it in a peculiar way which will not be allowed in any other industry inasmuch as the public pay in advance for the goods—entertainment in this case—that they are going to receive. This makes it all the more important for the film exhibitor and his manufacturer—the producer—to keep their patrons in good humour. We have advised the Film Industry to organise itself in order, specially, that the large sums of money that it spends can be well controlled and the best results obtained.

Exhibitors should have an important part in this reorganisation because it is through their efforts that the public come into contact with the film.

It is surprising that up to now, inspite of the large number of theatres, there does not, with one exception, exist an organised association representing the cinema exhibition trade. In Bombay a start was made by forming the Exhibitors' Group in the Motion Picture Society of India but what it has done is not generally known. In Northern India, however, there is a well organised Exhibitors' Association and through its activities many of the difficulties of the trade have come to the notice of the producers. The distributors, we have shown, are exercising a strong control over the industry in the production field. On the exhibition side also they have tried to do the same. The cinema owners also have had to give in to the distributors because there is no supply of pictures except through the latter.

The Exhibitors' Conference made many serious complaints about business conditions and protested

most strongly about booking terms. In general practice, a minimum guarantee is insisted upon from the cinemas by the Distributors. The terms of booking also include a scale of returns often as high as 60 per cent on the nett collections which are to be paid to the Distributors. This is not something new but has been the practice in the trade for many years and evidently cannot be a very great hardship because there has been a general increase in the number of theatres all over the country in spite of it. It seems to me that it is not the percentage of charges that is a handicap to the cinema but over-competition among theatres located in the same place. In the past when there were fewer cinemas, all of them got satisfactory audiences but as more and more were started, business became distributed and some, which were not so well organised as others, got into serious difficulties. Cinemas showing Indian pictures are on the whole very badly organised. Even in the recent conference of distributors a resolution was passed requesting theatre-owners to take special care to provide better comforts for their patrons. As one speaker remarked, cinemas should cease treating their patrons as railways treat their third class passengers. I have seen cinemas in which patrons are made to squat on the ground. No seats are provided in the lower classes. No fans are provided and as many people as can be packed in, are forced into the place that is available. Sanitary arrangements leave much to be desired. No care is taken to see that good projection and good sound are maintained.

A majority of cinemas showing foreign pictures take special care on these points. Many of them pay a very high sum per month merely to maintain their equipments in condition so that their patrons can be guaranteed good sound and clear projection of pictures. Comfortable waiting rooms for the convenience of those who go in advance of the show are not available. Many a time the public is forced to stand as a few dirty, ill-

kept benches or chairs are the only waiting accommodation available. Theatres showing foreign pictures have demonstrated to us that by providing greater comforts to their patrons they are able to do much better business. The standard they have set is worthy of emulation by our theatres. Even in big cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Lahore and Madras there are only few Indian cinemas which can be called satisfactory. Even these can be improved very much. It is surprising that even today none of the Indian cinemas, with one exception, are air-conditioned although this has come to be accepted as an elementary necessity in England and America and even in India more and more theatres showing foreign pictures are going in for it.

With the passing of years, Indian cinema audiences are increasing but, if we take into account what has been said by exhibitors, this is only very slight. We should not be satisfied with this. What has really happened is that the people of the better classes, and especially ladies in big cities, have begun to patronise Indian pictures. Though the income may be more, actual increase in numbers is, therefore, limited. Lack of progress is probably due mainly to lack of good accommodation for the cheaper and the very moderately priced seats. The rates of admission to cinemas is high compared to our standard of life. For India it would be more advisable to build larger theatres with bigger seating capacity and admit patrons at cheaper rates than at present. Until this is done our cinema audience will not increase to appreciable proportions.

There was a great deal of agitation when the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Corporation of America established cinemas at Calcutta and Bombay. While the agitation was correct inasmuch it was undesirable for foreigners to come into India and compete with local retail trade, it must be conceded that the starting of the Metro Cinemas in Bombay and Calcutta has been

responsible within two years for great improvements in other cinemas showing foreign pictures. The prices of seats are not actually low but have been reduced to a certain extent. For the money they pay, however, the public get a large number of extra benefits and conveniences. Competing cinemas have wisely taken a lesson and have also improved their organisation but unfortunately the cinemas showing Indian films still continue their policy of indifference to public needs.

Whenever we discuss these matters with theatre-owners we are told about the lack of finance. But if theatres showing foreign films can get finance to improve themselves, it should not be difficult for Indian cinemas also to do so. The very fact that many of the cinemas showing foreign films have turned to Indian pictures shows that the demand for Indian pictures is growing and if better halls are built more of the public will frequent our cinemas. It is the duty of the exhibitors to see that this is brought about. A comparison has been made between cinemas and retail shops. On the cinema, therefore, lies the great responsibility of increasing sales. The solution of the problem cannot be brought about by asking for a reduction in the booking terms. These are not, as a matter of fact, very heavy or strict. The demand of the cinemas that they should always make money even if the producers suffer loss on a picture is not justified. I do not think it is fair to bring up the argument that if a producer is unfortunate enough to release a picture which is not liked by the public, then he should suffer the loss and that exhibitors should not lose anything.

The producer does not, as was mentioned before, make a picture intentionally bad but it does so happen that pictures are made which the public do not like. It is, however, necessary that such pictures also should go into circulation and the loss should be reduced as much as possible. After all the producer risks a large amount of money on the picture to which risk the exhibitor

has contributed nothing. It is up to the latter, therefore, to come to the producer's rescue by showing the pictures. Even if he loses a few hundreds of rupees it should not be the cause for him to grumble since, if he is showing all the pictures of the same producer, the loss on one bad picture will be set off by profits on a large number of successful ones. One great difficulty of the exhibitor is, no doubt, the distributor's policy of not booking all the pictures of a company with the same cinema. They change the bookings if they get better terms from competing cinemas. Fortunately many distributors have now come to realise how bad this policy is. Another undesirable policy followed by the producers is to sell off the distribution rights to firms of distributors other than their regular agents. This brings about competition in respect of the same studio's products between two distributors and results in ultimate loss to the producer. Lack of finance has been the main ground on which sale of distribution rights is justified.

It is to be hoped that the industry, which is now striving to reorganise itself, will soon solve the problems of finance and distribution and that exhibitors will, in consequence get much better business terms for booking the pictures. The reorganisation of the financial basis of the film business cannot be brought about, however, unless the exhibition side is also improved. Only if the number of theatres is increased and the number of people going to the cinemas grows can the industry be said to be in a flourishing condition. 'Ten thousand cinemas in the next ten years' was one of the slogans of the Indian Motion Picture Congress. Mr. Chandulal J. Shah in his reception address advocated a five-year plan for the film industry. Speaking on the theatre side of this plan, he made a suggestion of how more theatres could be established in the country.

Closer co-operation between producers and exhibitors is very desirable. Distributors in the past have

not taken up the attitude of bringing together the producers and exhibitors. They have always tried to book films, changing the pictures of one producer from one theatre to the other depending upon the income of the minimum guarantee received. The scientific exploitation of a picture would mean a very close co-operation between the producers (the manufacturers) and the exhibitors (the retail shops). Every manufacturer likes a retail shop to deal exclusively in his products. So would the producers like their pictures to be shown exclusively by one theatre. Holding of conventions at the beginning of each year, when announcements are made regarding the productions for the season and for which exhibitors should be invited, would not only give them publicity but it is desirable in the interest of the producers. Exhibitors once they know of the plans, know the details of the stories to be produced and are explained the activities of the Publicity and Exploitation Department, of the help that they can get to present the picture in a particular town, will certainly find that this helps their trade to a very great degree. Producers and Exhibitors must appreciate one important point and that is that both are inclined to show the pictures as long as possible and to as great an audience as possible. It is in the interest of the exhibitors to see that producing concerns continue because only by the length of time it works is the reputation of a firm established. It takes time to build up stars who have a public following. It means a great deal of work to establish a film company. When such a Company has come up it is in the interest of the exhibitors to keep it going. It has been explained that it is necessary for financing the productions to have some system whereby producers receive a minimum guarantee amount for the films that they make. Unless this is done it will be impossible to finance productions to any great extent. This burden of guaranteeing a minimum return on a picture falls on the shoulders of the distributors who in turn naturally desire like sup-

port from the exhibitors who are their constituents. We have seen that it is undesirable for the distributors to book pictures at different theatres by bringing in competition and giving the picture to the person who gives the highest minimum guarantee. Exhibitors who established themselves in competition and took pictures by offering fancy minimum guarantees have suffered and it is those that are dissatisfied with the minimum guarantee system but it was their own fault. When a distributor takes the risk of guaranteeing a big sum, he must have the co-operation of the exhibitors who should show the picture and who must take a part of his burden. The financial structure of the whole Film Industry depends upon the working of the minimum guarantee system and therefore, both the distributor and exhibitor have to realise that it is a part of their business to meet the guarantee to the producer.

The exhibitors can feel more free to enter into such contracts whereby they are asked to guarantee a certain fixed amount on each picture that they take. If closer co-operation is brought about between exhibitors and producers, once they know the programme of the producers, know the pictures that are to be made, they will feel safe in the guarantees that they are making.

While bringing about the more economical production of talking pictures, encouragement should be given to financiers to start and build cinemas in towns and villages where there is scope for them.

A thorough enquiry is necessary into the number of cinemas that are needed for the country. It would be to the advantage of the producers to appoint an expert to tour the country, study the various big cities, towns big and small, and villages to draw up a scheme of cinemas that need to be established. Producers must realise that by increasing the number of cinemas they can increase their revenue and thus will be able to provide their studios with the additional capital that is

needed and additional facilities that are demanded by technicians and Directors. It would be to the advantage of the producer, therefore, to appoint such an expert who may be an Indian or a foreigner but who must be a man knowing the film trade well and can make a thorough study of Indian conditions and advise the industry in a clear manner. Undoubtedly, such a man must be well paid and, therefore, producers should combine themselves to form Associations in the various centres and create a fund for this purpose. The statistics that would be collected in the course of such an inquiry would be invaluable. It is of no use to expect the Government to take any step in this direction. It is not their business. It is the business of the Film Industry to increase its own scope. Government cannot be blamed for their lack of interest if the industry is not able to present its case for support in a proper manner. It is no use to ask or to state by resolutions what Government should do, without first of all making up a clear case. Facts and figures must be made available and it is for the industry to take steps to present such a report.

More theatres and better pictures was the motto given to the industry by the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Indian Motion Picture Congress. Producers and Exhibitors must realise that their interests are closely allied. So far these two branches of the industry have not worked with the necessary co-operation. Increasing the number of theatres and making better pictures is a great work for a country like India. Chances for employment are now limited and the development of the Film Industry may provide facilities for the absorption of number of skilled labourers and technicians. It is, therefore, in the interests of the country that the Film Industry gets good support. Undoubtedly, the country will help the industry, but first it has to put itself in proper order. As theatres improve themselves and their organisation the public

will realise the splendid opportunities offered by the Film Industry.

It is in the theatre that the valuation of the Film Industry takes place. To my mind it is the fact that theatres showing foreign pictures are much better both in management as well as in general appearance than cinemas showing Indian films that has accounted for film production and exhibition not being looked upon as a great national industry. The public feel that the industry is a small disorganised business. The cinemas are the shop windows of the industry. They must, therefore, realise the great part that they have to play in future development. By making their houses into first class show places they will raise the prestige of the industry to a level which it has not yet attained.

In this review we have seen the difficulties of production, distribution and exhibition. We have seen how the various sides of the business should improve and how the difficulties through which film production is now passing can be solved. In the following chapters other aspects of the industry relating to the part it can play other than merely providing entertainment to the public will be discussed.

CHAPTER XII

PRODUCTION OF NEWS REELS

The foregoing study of the Indian Film Industry has shown us that even the production of entertainment pictures can scarcely be said to be well-organised. It is not, therefore, surprising that no effort has, as yet, been made to produce news reels regularly. The industry has, rightly, maintained the attitude that the production of news reels must be dependent on Government support. A committee has been appointed by the Indian Motion Picture Congress to draw up a scheme, to be submitted to Government, as to the best methods for the production of news reels. Government should not stint its support in this matter since the exhibition of news reels will result in the proper understanding of one part of the country by others and the encouragement of national solidarity.

Few Indians know with any exactness how their countrymen in other provinces live and work. A traveller from one province feels almost that he is in a foreign country when he passes the frontiers of another. In other words, whilst there are many points of contact between the people of various provinces and the background of their culture is the same, the language and unusual surroundings make us feel that we are in an alien country. This is due to the fact that our system of Government has made us think provincially in terms of language and religion. But with the development of national sentiment we have come to realise the defects which have arisen on account of the policy of divide and rule. The establishment of Provincial Autonomy has, however, brought about a new outlook on the part of the people. Before the new programme can achieve any measure of success, it is essential for our national Ministries to have a large majority of the people at their back. Before it can speak with one voice the country

must be united. The great efforts to this end made by our leading politicians and statesmen can be assisted very greatly by a well-planned system of news reels. Today our foreign cinemas show news reels but they are all made abroad. They bring us news of the world. The only news of India they bring to us are items like the arrival of the Viceroy, at some State capital or other or his departure or his Garden Party.

If we were to study foreign news reels it would be seen that they serve a great purpose in maintaining and improving the standard of life in the countries of their origin. A section of the news reel is always reserved for sports and other activities. This rouses the spirit of emulation amongst the younger people. The physical fitness of the nation depends largely on the activities of its young men and almost every form of sport has a special review in the weekly news reels. Politics are also at times a part of them. Government's activities are reviewed, Ministers' statements are recorded and the practical side of administration is shown to the public in many ways. Military and Naval activities are always an important part of news reels. Not only does this bring about a sense of security among the public but, by showing the life of the soldier, the martial spirit of the country is maintained. We can easily imagine the utility of the news reels in such matters for a country like India where there are so many diverse interests to be reconciled to each other.

Important as the development of the news reel is from the point of view of national development, it is uninteresting to the film trade as a business because returns from it are not likely to be very satisfactory, especially in the initial stages. For one thing, no distribution arrangement exists at present for exploiting news reels. A suggestion was made at the Indian Motion Picture Congress that the Film Industry would be interested to develop news reels if the Government were to make it compulsory for them to be shown at

every cinema. This is a practical suggestion which is worthy of consideration. Even with such encouragement it is doubtful whether any film producer today has the equipment or the staff to undertake such work. The establishment of a news reel business would mean an all India organisation with much bigger capital investment than that of any film studio at the moment. Because of the great distances between the main cities and the lack of quick transport, news reels cannot be produced at any one centre. At least two or three centres for distribution and production will have to be maintained if a successful enterprise is to be launched. In this kind of production speed is the most important factor. News is interesting only so long as it is fresh. Any event whether political, social or sporting, will cease to interest the public unless it can be viewed the next day or so. The propaganda value of news reels can only be effective if the practical side of it is handled in a proper manner. And they will be a failure if produced merely for the sake of propaganda. The propaganda value of news reels as of newspapers is incidental and it should not be made their main view-point, which must be solely news.

Beyond the facilities which the Government can give, namely, making the exhibition of news reels compulsory, is the financial support that is necessary to start a news reel organisation. The technical facilities that are needed for news reel production are much more elaborate than what are needed for the production of entertainment films. The average studio in India is not equipped to produce or release news pictures at present. In my personal experience of making pictures of news interest I have found that there are a great many technical difficulties. It is very difficult to find suitable people who are able to write or to speak a correct and interesting commentary. It is difficult to get cameramen who understand enough to photograph scenes in a manner which would be interesting to the public to see. Just as the reporter of a paper writes an

interesting report of important news, so also the cameramen must have the ability to present an event in pictures in an interesting manner. If I may be permitted to coin a word, India needs Camera-Journalists, cameramen with a journalistic outlook. Laboratory facilities in our studios are also not sufficient for the productions of news reels. Unlike the editing of an entertainment picture the Editor of a news reel has to be very quick in his observations. From the material that is available to him he must be able to give an ordered and understandable sequence of events in an interesting manner. On account of the need for speed it is not possible to make positive copies from which the editor can choose the right sequences. He must be able to judge about the scenes he can use from the negatives.

The editing of the films that are received, preparing and recording the commentary, and making the prints have all to be done with the same amount of quickness and precision as is done in the newspaper office. A news reporter hears of an incident, makes up his story, writes it down or types it, gives it into the office where it is edited and polished up, and it appears in the paper in record time. More or less the same procedure applies to the news reel. Our film laboratories as now organised are sufficient to serve the needs of producers of entertainment pictures. Their editing goes on leisurely, their copies are taken out in small numbers and there is enough time for everything. For news reel production to be undertaken, therefore, cameramen and technicians will have to be trained. But this training can be secured only if production is going on. It might, therefore, be worthwhile to engage the services of news cameramen from foreign countries under whom young men here can work and get the necessary experience.

The most practical way of news reel production, therefore, would be by the promotion of a company by

Government with sufficient capital to set up an all-India news reel organisation. But here come the dangers of Government control. The failure of Government to develop broadcasting to any great extent inspite of the huge funds that have been provided shows that State control may not be the most helpful method for the promotion of semi-commercial enterprises. In Bombay a suggestion was made that Film Producers should float a company with Government support for this purpose. But the Bombay Government did not favour the idea. Even if they give their support, it is unlikely that a provincial news reel organisation will succeed. It is necessary to have an all-India organisation. But probably Bombay Producers wanted to have something like a monopoly in the line. We have seen that without competition and friendly rivalry business enterprise cannot flourish and improve. Production of news reels, therefore, if it is to reach the standard attained by Western countries, should be undertaken by a number of concerns rather than by a monopolistic corporation.

But in order that a start be made, it is essential that the exhibition of news reels must be made compulsory by all cinemas. Government should, further, support any company producing news reels by granting it a subsidy which should be continued until such time as production becomes an economic proposition. If the subsidy takes the shape, say, of a guaranteed return on capital to the shareholders for a period of 10 years, it will be a great encouragement for the starting of companies. Competing companies would gradually come into the field and it would be for the theatre to take the news reel which gives the best service to the public. It is difficult to give in this small review a detailed scheme for a news reel company but before any attempt can be made to promote a scheme a good deal of information, statistical and otherwise, will have to be collected.

CHAPTER XIII

EDUCATIONAL PICTURES

Unlike news reels, educational pictures are essentially a matter for Government and educational authorities. The production of educational pictures is not possible in India unless these decide to make an extensive use of them. There is no question of the value of the cinema for class room purposes or for adult education. Investigations made in the United States show that children learn much more quickly and retain information better from seeing than from hearing. For general knowledge undoubtedly Visual Education is very useful. Motion pictures issued by the Safety First Association, for instance, have done more to interest students in this all-important subject than any other type of teaching procedure. As an aid to the study of geography, the film can be an invaluable asset. Teachers can talk any amount about the working of the Suez Canal but hundreds of lectures will not equal in effect a moving picture actually showing the Canal. Visual Education, of course, does not mean education merely by the motion picture. Slides, Films, specimens and field trips are necessary and important teaching aids. But motion pictures today offer the greatest facility for visual education. Governments, public bodies and educational authorities in foreign countries are daily making greater use of them. With the growing use of the cinema projector in the class room, a very large number of films have been made available on an equally wide range of subjects.

One of the greatest difficulties to make a start in Visual Education by the film is the lack of projection equipment in Schools and Colleges. Our institutions are not equipped with projectors for two reasons, firstly, difficulties of

finance and, secondly, lack of supply of films. Educational Film Libraries are not in existence in this country and if these have to be established, considerable encouragement will have to be given to business concerns which are interested. If at least the Government managed schools in India were equipped with projectors, libraries would soon be established, and India could take advantage of the excellent films that are being made in England and America on educational subjects. Films are now available on almost every subject. Practically every aspect of the world of nature has been explored by the cine-camera. Films of the physical, plant, insect, marine, bird and animal worlds are readily available. In addition, a large number of films connected with art and architecture, industries and aviation which are useful for vocational studies, and pictures dealing with sports and athletics, have been made. Films on music and other arts, specially suitable for use in India are available.

If, with the aid of foreign films, visual education is once adopted as the general policy in all Government schools and colleges all over the country, a demand will soon be created for educational films on subjects dealing with India. The production of these films is a highly specialised business and it is not practical, in view of the existing difficulties of film production, to attempt their manufacture just now on any large scale. Until some of our producers specialise in this line, it will be to the advantage of the country if films made in foreign countries were used as educational aids in our schools and colleges. A great deal of literature is available explaining the advantages of the motion picture in education. In America the use of the film for this purpose has been very greatly developed and special Visual Education Consultants, who advise schools and colleges on suitable films, are attached to the Boards of Education in the various States.

In my personal investigations regarding the suitability of visual education for Indian students, I had established in Bombay a Visual Education Bureau and invited headmasters of leading schools to co-operate with me in selecting suitable films. The response I got was poor but still we arranged a number of shows in various public theatres, the programmes being made up of general knowledge films which are available as short subjects along with a few foreign entertainment pictures. These shows were great successes and teachers were very enthusiastic about our scheme.

Unfortunately, on account of lack of any encouragement from Government and educational authorities, I found it difficult to continue these experiments which were rather expensive. Representations were made to Government to take an interest in our activities but they do not appear to have made any impression on our local authorities.

At the recent Educational Film Conference in Bombay the report of the Government of Bengal's activities made very interesting reading. The Government of Bengal spends a fairly large sum in making locally films of public interest, and exhibiting these by means of travelling cinemas at different centres. Visual Education is so important that the facilities offered by motion pictures should be recognised by educational authorities. Unfortunately, very little was achieved at the Educational Film Conference held along with the Motion Picture Congress which, in my opinion, did not tackle the real problem of educational films but went on the wrong tack by discussing the production of local films. The Educational Film Conference should have discussed the means whereby projectors would become standard equipment in every school and college. It should have discussed ways and means for bringing this about and should have appointed a Committee of experts to draw up a plan and to make representations to the authorities to convince them that it was essential

to sanction a grant for the purchase of equipments. It would have been useful if the Conference had made a study of the educational films that are available from foreign countries. Hundreds of films have already been made and a large number is being turned out every month.

If a Central Department for giving advice on educational films could be created with grants from all the Governments, it would be possible to set up an Advisory Board which would be the clearing house for information on films available from different countries. This Central Office should buy copies of every educational film made in England, America and other countries. New films should be reviewed and a report should be published as to their suitability for exhibition to Indian students. This would encourage private business houses to import films and maintain libraries from which local schools and colleges could rent them out. It has been suggested that Government should start libraries but the very large number of schools and colleges preclude the possibility of any such move. A continuous supply of films is necessary and their hiring and circulation is really the job of a business organisation. Films have to be looked after, and repaired whenever they break or wear out. There are many other special points which it would be impossible for Government to deal with as it would involve the starting of something like a business concern at various centres. It would, therefore, be better to leave this work to commercial enterprise. But it is absolutely essential that the first step towards an educational film service for our schools should be the setting up of a Central Office at Delhi under Government auspices.

A further development of this central office could be the training of special consultants who could tour the various provinces and advise Educational Departments as to the correct method of working the Visual Educational Service. Though nothing very practical

was achieved at the Educational Film Conference, it showed us that there was very keen interest in the possibilities of the film among people connected with education. Whilst the Conference recommended that Provincial Governments should lay down the use of the film in education as a principle of policy, the resolutions passed by the Conference did not indicate how it should be done if we except a suggestion to appoint a Board of Visual Education to secure co-operation between film producers and educational authorities and to maintain and develop film libraries. A practical way of bringing this resolution into effect would be, as suggested above, the appointment of a Board at Delhi from grants to be made by every Provincial Government and the Central Government.

Unless some such course is adopted, it will not be possible to make an effective start on visual education. Today the amount that is spent in the various provinces on this subject is more or less a waste. In Bombay there is one Visual Education Officer for the whole of the Province, and he goes about with slides and lanterns giving shows to schools. I believe that on an average he visits a school once in six months or so. Only by a stretch of imagination can we call this a Visual Education Service. After establishing a library of films Government should aid schools to buy projectors by grants or otherwise. It might be considered worthwhile for the Government of India to start a factory for the production of projectors. Such an organisation would probably take many years to function well and until this is done it might be worthwhile to abolish the import duty on educational film machinery because the 30 per cent which is now charged is quite heavy and makes the price of projectors rather prohibitive to schools with moderate means. Once it is known that every school is to have a projector and that there is a Board to advise on the correct type of pictures for the students, private business enterprise will set up at

various centres, libraries which will rent out suitable pictures to schools.

It is only after such a preparatory period that educational films in India will be a practical proposition because, as soon as production begins the cost of the films can be recovered by circulating them to schools in the country.

It might be worthwhile mentioning that with every educational film the producers supply a hand-book prepared by competent educational experts giving full directions to the teacher as to how to use it to the best advantage. It was unfortunate that the Educational Film Conference did not study the methods of foreign production and their adaptation to Indian conditions. But a start has been made and more concrete work will perhaps be done in the next Session. It is now for our Educational authorities to impress local Governments with the necessity of setting up a Central Board of Visual Education on the lines discussed in this chapter. One of the resolutions passed at the Educational Film Conference recommended that suitable men should be sent to foreign countries to study visual education methods. This could very easily be done if a Central Board of Visual Education is set up and receives sufficient grants from the Provincial and Central Governments.

A subject that was touched upon at the Educational Film Conference was the production of propaganda films. It was suggested that producers and cinema houses in the country should co-operate with educational authorities for making and exhibiting such pictures. It must, however, be remembered that the public pays for entertainment when they visit a cinema and propaganda through the cinemas might be objected to. In certain States of Europe it is compulsory for the cinemas to show Government propaganda films, but it must be considered that there is a probability of undesirable propaganda being done if proper control is

not exercised. It is undoubtedly the duty of Government to make propaganda films for information on public utility matters but it is inadvisable to use entertainment houses for showing them unless the propaganda is for an important purpose like the spreading of knowledge on public hygiene in the event of a serious epidemic. The use of the film for public education purposes is certainly of great importance to the country. It is, therefore, necessary that great care should be exercised before propaganda films are made by Government and shown compulsorily at the cinemas. No expert knowledge is yet available for this purpose and before any extensive production of this class of film is taken in hand, it would certainly be worthwhile for the Government to study the resolution passed at the Conference recommending to them the establishment of a Central Academy for imparting training in the cinema arts. Such an institution would be of great use in the preparation of educational films also. From practical experience in the making of propaganda pictures I know that the greatest drawback existing at present is lack of experience and information. Propaganda films made under such circumstances are hardly effective and films which do not hold the attention of the public can never serve the purpose for which they are intended.

News reels, educational and propaganda pictures, though allied to each other, have their own individual problems. The production of news reels is the most important and should be undertaken immediately. The early introduction of an Educational Film Service is necessary because of its great value for schools and colleges. The Central Board of Visual Education, therefore, must be established without further delay. After these two items have been tackled, the third step would be the setting up of an Academy after which the production of films locally will follow automatically and without great trouble.

CHAPTER XIV

THE INDIAN MOTION PICTURE CONGRESS AND AFTER

In the preceding chapters mention has many times been made of the Indian Motion Picture Congress and the subsidiary Conferences. Through the initiative of Mr. Chandulal J. Shah, who had the great foresight to see that many of the present difficulties of the Indian Film Industry were due to the lack of unity and co-operation between the producers and the various branches and sections of the Film Industry a committee was set up to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the Indian Film Industry and to inaugurate a Congress of all persons actively connected with film production, distribution and exhibition. It was a fortunate day indeed for the Film Industry on which the meeting was held in Bombay at the invitation of Mr. Chandulal Shah and this committee was set up. By bringing together various persons connected with films it was possible to realise the vast ramifications the Indian Film Industry. A great many sensible suggestions were made and discussed at the various meetings but unfortunately very little action resulted from all the talk.

Critics of the activities of the Congress can be divided into two main sections : One section only limits itself to praising what was done and the personalities concerned, while the other section consists of those who run down everything connected with it, probably because they did not get any place. These people forget that if they deserved a place they would have got it. Every little incident connected with the Congress has been criticised but we are not told who will benefit if the Congress is criticised out of existence. It was expected that if the industry once realises its own importance and influence in the country it would not again

go back to its policy of former days, namely indifference and drift.

For some reason which nobody has yet been able to understand, Mr. Chandulal Shah, after the holding of Congress Session, has withdrawn from its activities. And the guiding spirit having gone, the Congress is now struggling for existence. There being no one to defend its utility, its adversaries are having a good time and fill up many pages in various publications with destructive criticism.

The Indian Motion Picture Congress received enthusiastic support from every quarter. It was felt that it would be worthwhile making it into a permanent body having as its aim the development of the industry in all its aspects. A comprehensive scheme has been framed to establish the Congress as a permanent organisation. Naturally there was great hurry and the views of all parties had not been obtained. The President of the Congress, Mr. S. Satyamurthi, very wisely brought in a resolution which laid down the groundwork of the new organisation. Committees were to be set up at different centres to draw up a scheme which would finally come before an all India Central Board. This Board, consisting of leaders and enthusiastic workers, had the powers to draw up a final constitution to be approved at the next Session which is to be held at Calcutta. The large gathering which had assembled at Bombay went back hoping that the foundation had been laid for a new era for the Indian Film Industry and it was rightly felt that it could hope for something concrete from the Congress. The need for a central organisation for the Indian Motion Picture Industry has been felt even from the days of the silent pictures. The Indian Cinematograph Committee appointed in 1927, also recommended a Central Body, which, according to it, could play an important part in the development of the Industry. It is interesting to note that these suggestions were adopted by the British authorities and

as a result of the findings of the Committee, the British Film Institute was set up. This body gets a grant of £10,000/- from the Government of England and has played an important part in the development of the British Industry. It has been responsible to a great extent for the unique progress made in England in the production of educational films.

No action was, however, taken on the Indian Cinematograph Committee's report in India. Probably the Government of those days was not very anxious to encourage the Film Industry as it could exercise a tremendous influence on the public mind and this influence might in course of time be detrimental to the interests of a non-national Government. But the authorities were not alone to blame. Our leaders and statesmen also did not press for any support to the Indian Film Industry. And the industry in itself was not united.

Soon after the report came the talking picture which so greatly disorganised the industry at that time that it had no opportunity to formulate a joint policy or to press for action on the Committee's suggestions. With the growth of the talkies a far larger number of people than before have been attracted to the business, and this has brought a more intelligent understanding of its problems. Several of those who wish for the prosperity of the industry have from time to time made valuable suggestions. Demands for united action by the industry have appeared in the press quite frequently of late and it was on this account that the first session of the Indian Motion Picture Congress was so very enthusiastically received. The aims and objects of the Congress, if it is made into a permanent body, should follow the aims and objects of the Central Department visualised in the Indian Cinematograph Committee's report. In this connection I should urge upon the leaders of the Congress and the industry to study the working of the British Film Institute carefully.

It is sometimes the fashion amongst us to blame the Government for all that goes wrong. Government can, no doubt, help the film industry substantially but the source of many of its troubles lies in other directions. In this review I have shown that the industry suffers a good deal from its disorganisation. Its structure has not been properly planned. Its leaders are too busy to plan any definite scheme for progress and have not realised that film production is the one industry in which there is little to fear from competitors. No one concern can capture the market and supply the demand of all cinemas. Unlike a manufacturing concern which has always to fear competitors, film producers can thrive best by co-operation with sister concerns. The resources of even the best studio in India cannot produce more than five or six pictures while a cinema needs a very large number every year. It will, therefore, be seen that it is not the Government that is at fault. The difficulties of the industry are not due alone to the Government not putting the recommendations of the Indian Cinematograph Committee into effect. If they had taken action it might have eased the situation. It might have helped the producers and the businessmen connected with other departments of the industry. But it would have been wise for the industry to have set up a central organisation on its own initiative. The manufacturers of coffee, tea, sugar and many other commodities have set up their own Central Boards to advise them on their marketing conditions and once they showed a spirit of self-help, Government have given them very good support.

I had welcomed the Indian Motion Picture Congress on this account. Even now it is not too late and it would be worthwhile for the industry to support the Congress and bring into effect the aims and objects which it has set before itself. The proposed central organisation should have in its employ experts who can study all its problems, and draw up schemes to advise

not only the industry and all those connected with it, but also the Government. It is realised that the film industry needs financing on a scientific, businesslike basis. It would be for the Congress to employ experts who can study film finance and economics and draw up a scheme which would appear attractive to the investing public. It is realised that more cinemas are needed. Here again the Congress can give excellent service to the industry. It is necessary to plan out a scheme of how within ten years there could be 10,000 cinemas in the country and how producers and financiers could combine to this end. In Bombay City there are 42 cinemas at present for a population of a million and a quarter. It is said that some more are to be started. Ten thousand cinemas for India are, therefore, not too many. But before the cinemas could be started it is necessary that there should be active propaganda for making the people of India cinema conscious. A Central Bureau of Publicity for the Industry, not to sell pictures, but to sell people the idea that "motion pictures are their best entertainment" is necessary. Countries in the West have many different forms of popular entertainment like radio and the drama. Radio in India is still in its infancy and drama is practically dead. The cinema is, therefore, the only means of mass entertainment for the millions of this country. It is by far the best propaganda for raising the standard of living.

For the making of better pictures and to see that the technique is improved, scholarships should be granted to deserving young men to acquire training abroad. The collection of funds for setting up these scholarships would be a function of the Central Organisation. Public minded persons who wish to donate sums for educational purposes should be approached and the advantages of a well organised Indian Film Industry should be explained. Government too could obtain from this Central Organisation advice regarding the grant of faci-

lities for advanced study in film production. Apart from these general activities, the special problems of the trade like taxation, production of educational films and facilities for historical research, could all be dealt with by the Central Organisation. I repeat once again that it is not for the Government to take the initiative in setting up this Organisation. It is really for the leaders of the industry. It is up to them to realise how useful this body would be to themselves. When Government wants educational or propaganda pictures to be made, it will come to the Central Bureau for advice and guidance. At that time, for the service that it can give, it can rightly expect a liberal grant from the authorities and I am sure it will get it.

When a deputation of the Indian Motion Picture Congress waited on the Commerce Member of the Government of India last year, he was very sympathetic in the matter of Government help to a Central Organisation of this nature. But before anything can be done, before the public can be persuaded that it is right for a sum to be reserved from the country's revenues for a Central Organisation for the Film Industry, it is necessary for the latter to give an idea of the great part it can play in national economy. It must, therefore, be realised and appreciated that the Indian Motion Picture Congress, if properly supported, can do a great deal of good to the industry. As Mr. Satyamurti remarked, everyone connected with the business of Indian film production, distribution and exhibition should join the Congress not with the object of getting the utmost from it but with that of giving it the utmost.

People in Bombay should not consider the Congress as their special provincial affair but should look on it as an organisation belonging to the whole country. It is no doubt creditable to Bombay that it should desire to be the leading film centre but the industry has every right to flourish in other places also. Encouragement must be given to the industry in every province. The

outlook of the Congress must be national and not provincial. If Bombay has the organisation and the personnel then it can get the best advantage from the facilities that will result from the activities of the Congress. If Bengal or Madras can organise themselves better, they have the right and the claim to get the best out of the Congress. There should be healthy rivalry and competition, but the Congress, if it is to have any weight can only be an All-India organisation serving the industry in the production of entertainment, educational and propaganda films. It cannot limit itself to help the producers and not the exhibitors. It cannot be utilised for the benefit of one particular department of the industry.

In Mr. Chandulal J. Shah's review of the Indian Film Industry in the course of the address of welcome at the Congress, he mentioned that the Industry had yet a great deal to do. He said : " In my stocktaking, I will frankly admit, that we have achieved little and yet have to do much. For that, I repeat with force that, as in the last twenty-five years, so also in the future, we must not depend on outside help but help ourselves. Let us unite and form ourselves into a powerful body whose aim is, " One for all and all for one ". Let us—Producers, Distributors, Exhibitors, Artistes, Technicians, Authors and Directors—begin to help one another. Let us understand each other's difficulties and let us tackle them boldly and with determination. This Congress will establish itself in every part of the country, and our Provincial Councils and the Central Board of Governors will solely devote their time and energy to the problems of our industry, and it shall be in your hands, Ladies and Gentlemen, to give them your fullest co-operation, to help them in building up a solid structure, for a prosperous Film Industry in India ".

CHAPTER XV

SECTIONAL CONFERENCES

The Motion Picture Congress showed how disorganised we are and indicated the great need for combining together to understand the difficulties of every branch of our industry so that one could help the other. The various sectional conferences held at the time have given a great deal of matter for study to those who are interested to see the Indian Film Industry developing on right lines. The first of these conferences to be held was that of Film Journalists. They constitute a branch of the great press organisation functioning in India which can help a great deal in the development of the Film Industry. Unfortunately the presidential address at the Conference was mostly devoted to an attack on producers, and when it came to deal with the function of journalists themselves, the only important point dealt with was propaganda against anti-Indian pictures. The problems of film journalists and producers was touched upon but lightly. The Conference failed to consider what journalists could do to serve the industry and what would be the best methods for doing so. But the resolutions passed were interesting. To the producer they indicated how the Film Industry has played into the hands of journalists. The former is greatly mistaken in thinking that the film journalist is his salesman. The film journalist is a critic. He has a special duty to perform. He has to give to the public a proper judgment of the value of a picture. The public have to pay before they see a picture and it is, therefore, necessary to have an organisation to tell them its value as entertainment. The producers, unfortunately, on account of their spending power have tried to utilise the press and its critics as their salesmen. However indifferent or bad a picture is, they have

tried to utilise the journalist to persuade the public to patronise it by incorrect views. This has resulted in an undesirable influence being exercised by the Film Press. It is right, therefore, for the industry to learn from the Conference that the functions of a Film Journalist and Publicity Manager are entirely different and cannot be combined.

The only way to encourage a healthy film press is not to support a paper by advertisements unless it is definitely good according to the standards usually applied to all papers. The policy hitherto followed, of patronising publications which wrote what was wanted has been definitely harmful to the industry. The journalists themselves have now come to realise that once there are a sufficient number of people who will sell their pens, the standard of film criticism cannot but go down. They cannot have any weight with the public. It is well known that the majority of film papers exist on their income from the advertisements which they receive from the producers. They have very little following; yet they continue to force producers to advertise by threatening unfavourable criticism and personal attacks. How a healthy tendency can be brought about has not been explained to us at the Conference of Film Journalists. Apart from this one difficulty, regarding the relations between Film Journalists and producers, nothing very important was discussed in this Conference.

It would be useful for the proprietors and publishers of magazines relating to the Film Industry, and of those periodicals which maintain special sections reserved for it, to study the proceedings of the Film Journalists' Conference. The film critic is an important person and, therefore, it is necessary for those responsible to know that undesirable criticism is a dangerous thing. The Cinematograph Exhibitors Association recently laid down the requisites of a competent film critic. These are (1) that he or she should be a lover

of films, not a high-brow, aloof sort of person, (2) that he or she should be a capable critic and (3) that he or she should have some real practical knowledge of what the public wants.

It is also necessary for film producers to appreciate that it is important that a critic should have the freedom to criticise so long as he is honest and keeps himself within bounds. So long as the reviewer does not go beyond the bounds of fair comment and he writes nothing personal, no objection should be raised. It is when these limits are not observed that it is necessary to take strong action.

The Educational Film Conference unfortunately did not pay attention to real problems of educationists in introducing visual instruction by means of the film in schools and colleges. It did not consider or set up a body to consider the great efforts that have been made in this connection in foreign countries and how these could be utilised in our own institutions. It asked Government to help but did not create an organisation which could claim their attention. The resolutions in this Conference were more or less of a general nature. They made suggestions as to what Government should do and what the producers should do but they did not suggest what part educational authorities—those who are connected with education, those who are responsible for the bringing up of our children—should play. As is unfortunately all too usual with us, practical suggestions were conspicuous by their absence. But many ideas have been expressed and many theories were defined by the Conference.

The next four conferences held were those of Distributors, Exhibitors, Technicians and Artistes. Here again, little of practical value was achieved. But almost every one of these Conferences gave advice to the producers and told them where they were making mistakes. It was unfortunate that all of them followed the usual procedure in fixing all blame on the producers. There

was no attempt made to save the producers, to find out why they have failed when distributors and exhibitors continue to prosper and why producing concerns change hands. The charging of minimum guarantee was an important subject at these Conferences and very hot discussions took place but nobody came forward with an alternative scheme to suggest how producers should be guaranteed a financial return on their pictures.

The Artistes' and Technicians' Conferences, it must be said, suggested some practical methods for better working in the studios. The first one made some slight attempt to solve the problems of the artistes in relation to film production. They expressed their views very sensibly. Unlike those of other Conferences, the Artistes' and Technicians' Conferences were notable for their very concise and instructive resolutions. It is worth noting that in all the Conferences there was a general criticism of Film Journalists and it is to be hoped that an early attempt will be made by writers in and owners of film papers to organise themselves on a basis whereby they can help the healthy growth of the business of film production in India. The Conferences might have been able to do more if there had existed a Central Organisation which could give effect to the decisions that were arrived at. Indeed, the one great lesson to be learned from the Congress and the Conferences is the necessity for establishing this at the earliest possible moment.

There are many problems which have to be solved to bring about a better understanding between those concerned with film production and exhibition. It is worthwhile, therefore, for everyone who is connected with the Film Industry in any way, whether as technician, as an artiste, as an exhibitor, as a distributor, as a publicity manager, as a film critic or as a producer, to be united for the uplift of the Industry. This can be done most effectively by recognising the Congress as the Central Organisation of the industry. The various branches of the industry must enable it to function by

giving proper financial help. If we can afford to spend thousands in publicity, in artistes' salaries, in going for outdoor shooting to the Indian States, in purchasing raw stock, we should be able easily to set apart a good sum of money to finance the Congress. We must employ experts to run its organisation, and not depend solely on honorary work. At the meeting of the Congress it was decided to have a Secretary on a pay of Rs. 150/-.

It is ridiculous to expect a capable Chief Executive Officer for a great industry like film production, which operates in every part of the country, on this meagre salary. It is impossible to get experts if we do not pay them well. If we want a Central Organisation worth the name to serve the Industry, it must have qualified and capable officers to run it. They must be well paid. A strong case has been made out for the establishment of a Central Organisation. We all realise the value of such a body and we must, therefore, see that it is established on the right lines. It is now the duty of those of the members of the Conferences and the Congress who worked on the various Committees to see that this is accomplished. It is a pity that the guiding spirit of Mr. Chandulal J. Shah is no more at the service of the Congress but I am sure that there are people in the industry who will not allow this great effort to die out. Their help and their zeal will keep up the enthusiasm which has been created and the industry will realise that one of the most important methods by which its outstanding problems can be solved and its position in the life of the nation acknowledged is to put its own house in order. The first step to put into force the five year plan advocated at the Congress should be the organisation of the Congress as an all India body representing the film trade.

CHAPTER XVI

NATIONAL PLANNING IN RELATION TO FILM INDUSTRY

“ So that history should not repeat itself and that when war breaks out women will be prepared and informed, we must fit her psychologically for war in times of peace. We must use all the best propaganda means at our disposal, particularly the film, to enlighten the masses. The women who see these films must have only one idea : ‘ When war breaks out I want to be as strong and heroic as the heroine in the Film ’. Each woman must be proud of her relatives in the front lines ; she must force herself to contribute to the final victory of the country ; she must be proud of having the opportunity of sacrificing her dearest treasure, her son, for her country. When this frame of mind becomes general among women, we will no longer have them writing to their relatives in the trenches, preaching pacifism, as they did in the last war ”.

This quotation from a European pamphlet proves the importance attached to film propaganda by some of the strongest nations. For German women, Nazi propaganda is carried out by the film. Film propaganda has played a great part in the regeneration of Germany. So also in Russia, Italy and elsewhere. A well established Film Industry is a great national asset. There is every reason to insist that the film should be given its proper place by the members of our Government or members of the National Planning Committee appointed by the Indian National Congress. It seems to be the latter's belief that the Indian Film Industry is not so important as to deserve any serious consideration. As a matter of fact, the Film Industry will be a valuable asset in every branch of national planning. It is, therefore, all the more necessary that one of the first steps to be taken in any plan of development should be to plan the development of the Film Industry. In the same way as

National Planning in general for all round economic improvement is chalked out so also must be chalked out the plan of development of the Film Industry.

Physical fitness is, I believe, an important part of national planning and it is probably receiving a great deal of attention. When the Government of Bombay announced their great interest in this important matter, I sent to the Prime Minister through his Parliamentary Secretary a report of the British Film Institute which described the efforts that had been made to improve physical fitness in England by means of the film. It is well known that while in former years in England one in every ten recruit was rejected for military service, a recent report showed the percentage of rejections at only 2.3 per cent. This is claimed to be due to the campaign for physical fitness in which the film played an important part. The report of the British Film Institute referred to mentioned something like 110 films, out of which 75 films are suitable for use in India. Yet no interest was taken by the Government in my letter. I have had no reply except a brief acknowledgment of the receipt of the letter as well as the report. This example illustrates how necessary it is to have a proper plan for the development of the industry in regard to its nation-building aspect. The development of the industry must take place on an all India basis and in view of the important investigations that are being conducted by the National Planning Committee under the Chairmanship of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, it is my opinion that a simultaneous planning of the Film Industry would be of very great help.

It is not correct to consider the planning of the industry only from the angle of whether the raw film and the projectors could be manufactured in India and how this is to be brought about. The National Planning Committee is not entirely restricted to planning industrial development. It is concerned with national development, in other words the development of the

whole nation to a better standard of living, the accomplishment of economic independence and the securing of increasing benefits to the people by providing education and so on. The betterment, therefore, of every department of national life and activity would come under the scope of national planning and I think I am right in believing that the Committee is working on these lines. Undoubtedly it is laying great stress on the development of industries because of the belief that the industrialisation of India will help towards its economic independence.

The Film Industry is important to India, both because of its educational as well as its entertainment value. The making of films is a specialised business needing skilled persons. Directly or indirectly every type of business has a connection with film production. In a review made by the Department of Commerce in the United States it was stated that 276 different arts and professions are connected in some way or other with film production. The development of the Film Industry, therefore, will influence and help many professions and trades. The Film Industry is important from the point of view of Government revenue because it pays a good sum by way of duty and tax. The circulation of films to different towns and cities all over the country is done entirely by railway, and the Film Industry pays a large sum of money by way of freight. As a source of profit also, therefore, the Film Industry's development is necessary to India.

The chief problem of the industry now is the obtaining of finance for the building and equipping of studios and for the production of films. Finance is needed for the improvement of existing picture houses and for building and equipping cinemas in places where they do not exist. The industry has to be developed to provide an efficient system for the production and distribution of news-reels, the production of educational pictures, the starting of libraries of Educational Films

and the equipping of schools and colleges with projectors to show educational pictures and finally for the production of propaganda and adult education pictures for the general benefit of the country.

A five year plan of development of the industry is most necessary. This should depend to some extent on the investigations of the National Planning Committee in other fields also. The industry should organise itself and furnish a case for its inclusion in any scheme of future national development. Unfortunately, in spite of the deputations and claims made through the Indian Motion Picture Congress and the Indian Motion Picture Producers' Association the National Planning Committee, even in its meeting at Bombay in June 1939, made no announcement as to what it would do for the Film Industry. It is now for the leaders of the Industry to organise themselves for their case to be heard. In our review of the industry and its various branches we have seen the extreme urgency of combined and co-ordinated action within itself. Unless this is brought about, it is difficult to realise what help it can hope to receive from public bodies.

I have indicated in this review how the production of entertainment films can be improved, how theatres could be set up and in what manner the business could be made generally attractive to the investing and financing public. It is now necessary to work out a detailed scheme for this purpose and it is now for the trade to do something without delay. It is necessary once again, therefore, to stress the necessity of making the Indian Motion Picture Congress a permanent all India body and to inaugurate under its auspices an office which can give information on subjects concerning films, solve the technical problems of production and projection, issue publications on educational films available and give an authentic review on educational and entertainment films and generally to guide the industry, the Government and public bodies on all film matters.

CHAPTER XVII

FOREIGN EXPLOITATION

To complete our review of the Film Industry it is important for us to consider foreign markets. Producers, Artistes and Directors have from time to time mentioned about their great ambition to make an international picture worthy of being shown in England and America. They have pointed out to us how the British Film Industry, which was absolutely unheard of a few years ago, came into prominence when Mr. Alexander Korda made his film on Henry VIII, how British films after that made attempts to capture the American market and were able to attract capital and financial assistance which made possible the building of great studios in London. Undoubtedly India should make efforts to make international pictures which would present a true picture of the country to the world. The production by Americans of films showing Indians in an undesirable light has been rightly criticised. The reply to this, however, is not to agitate for the banning of such films from being shown in India, but to show Indian culture, Indian history and Indian aspirations in their proper light to the world. It is right for every one to encourage the production on an international scale of films in India but this will not be possible unless our industry makes sufficient progress. Unless we have efficient technicians, and properly trained Directors and authors who can prepare films suitable to the taste of the people of the West, such attempts will be a failure. An international film must study the international market and then only can it be a success.

But there is another foreign market for Indian films. There is a large Indian population in other countries in Asia and probably even some of the Eastern European countries would like to see Indian pictures

as now made. Unfortunately our Film Industry has made no real efforts to study foreign developments and although our pictures do go to Africa, the Malaya States and West Indies, we have yet to see exploitation on a proper basis.

Our clever financiers have managed to get a grip on these markets also by buying the foreign exploitation rights for small sums of Rs. 3,000/- and Rs. 5,000/. Some of them maintain their offices in Singapore and in Africa and make a good profit by exploiting them. Producers have not realised the great possibilities of our films in foreign countries and it would really be in their interests to send out an expert to investigate the markets and to study the conditions there. It is no use for the producers to expect the present distributors to give them good foreign exploitation. Very few of them have ever gone out of the country and they do not know what are the possibilities of development in these places. As usual they are only concerned to get back the price they pay and as they pay a low price they are satisfied if they can get 25 per cent or 50 per cent on it. As they do not know the methods of scientific exploitation in India, we cannot expect them to do anything better in foreign countries.

For foreign countries it would be advisable for producers of India to set up a Co-operative Foreign Exploitation Organisation which should have the monopoly for all the films made in India for different territories. This organisation should control all films and therefore will be able to set up offices at all important centres. As the combined returns will be substantial, it will be possible not only to employ experts who have a knowledge of the country but also to expand the exploitation to countries where Indian films have not yet gone. There are many trading restrictions and because there is no strong body many exhibitors who wish to show Indian films are unable to do so.

This also could be solved if there is a powerful body representing all the producers.

For the development of the Indian Film Industry revenue from foreign countries will be a very great asset, and it would help to compensate us for the money that goes out of the country for buying foreign raw films. Our Governments should also take an interest in this matter and the various Trade Commissioners and Agents representing the Government of India should be persuaded to take an interest in developing the markets for Indian films. Here again it is necessary to emphasise the necessity of joint action by the producers. It is necessary to send out good films to show the great progress that has been made in our industry. Our countrymen abroad are longing to see Indian films as they bring to them the memory of their mother country. There is no doubt that they are willing to help the mother country's enterprise in making films on Indian culture. They will gladly pay to see our films rather than those made in a foreign language. It is, therefore, to the interest of the industry to make a proper investigation about foreign markets. Producers, therefore, should not sell off their foreign distribution rights but should work with other firms in setting up a foreign exploitation company. Large capital is not needed because the films are already made. It is enough for a few copies to be taken which is not expensive, but it is necessary to employ good men to go and study the markets and establish offices to properly exploit and circulate the films.

This is an aspect of the industry where the producers can combine without fear of competition or of losing anything, because the better the exploitation the more returns the producers will get. Two producers in Bombay who are following a policy of maintaining their own distribution organisation, and which is in my opinion chiefly responsible for their financial success, have made investigations into exploitation in foreign

countries and the results have been startling. Not only have they shown possibilities of much greater returns but there is room for such development that it can safely be said that if exploitation is done properly the income from foreign markets will easily equal that from this country. Except for Tamil Pictures, because of the large Tamil speaking population in Malaya States, the foreign exploitation of our pictures brings only Rs. 3,000 or Rs. 5,000. Producers believe that there is not much scope in foreign exploitation and have not given serious thought to the subject. The possibilities are there. Producers should at least now take steps to exploit the films they have already made and which have not gone to foreign lands.

CHAPTER XVIII

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Readers might have seen how necessary it is to have in India a healthy and well organised Film Industry. We have seen that many of our difficulties have come about through lack of finance. We cannot today claim that our thirty odd studios, spread over a dozen production centres, with small capital investment and with limited equipment and machinery constitute an industry worthy of our standing. We, who are in such close contact with the industry which is responsible for our maintenance, should realise that we have only laid the foundations and have in spite of difficulties and handicaps nursed it for 25 years to its present level. We must now realise our own handicaps and where we have gone wrong. We must see that every branch of the Industry is organised by setting up associations and trade bodies. If it is necessary to change the constitution or management of any Association, then it must be done so that every one of these is patronised and helped by the members. Within itself the industry must be united. When the Indian Motion Picture Congress was organised it created a great awakening amongst those who were directly connected with film production.

No one will deny that the Indian Film Industry needs development. But before any claim can be made, the present differences of opinion must vanish. There should be greater co-operation among those who are concerned with the industry. Producers must be united. Many of their present difficulties are due to disunity amongst themselves which have helped in the exploitation of themselves and their organisations by financiers, distributors and others. Even for small difficulties the remedy is organisation and co-operation.

The holding of the Indian Motion Picture Congress was a step of the greatest benefit to the industry and the work it has done must be continued. The Congress must be held at least once in three years if not oftener. The different branches and sections of the industry must form themselves into Associations and they must promote the Congress Sessions from time to time. Encouragement must be given to every section to be organised on a proper basis. There should not be any spirit of exploiting one branch at the expense of another. However great may be the investment in it, the development of the Industry is dependent entirely upon one main factor, the circulation of pictures, and it is very necessary that greater control should be exercised by the producers to bring about the effective exploitation of films not only in India but also abroad.

Some of the suggestions made in the foregoing pages may appear difficult to carry out. But knowing intimately the problems of the industry I can say that if there is a will, none of these suggestions are beyond our capacity to put into practice. When an enterprising journalist asked me to give him a message on the occasion of the Film Jubilee, I wrote as follows : "The whole Film Industry is proud to celebrate the Jubilee. There is a great deal to be done to develop the Industry. Let the motto of the Film Industry be : 'United, the Film Industry stands for a greater India'".

I have always appealed for the Industry to develop, apart from its entertainment activities, nation-building aspects which cannot be neglected. But we cannot tackle this side successfully unless the industry is united and organised within itself. This review is an appeal to all who are responsible to guide the destinies of the Film Industry in India, to learn a lesson from the past, and to realise that their first duty is to organise their business before the outside help which they are claiming can come to them.

APPENDIX I

Statement showing the Imports of Raw and Exposed Films into British India and the amount of duty collected thereon during the Calendar years 1927 to 1938.

| Year | Cinema Films Imports (Length in feet) | | Value in Rupees | | Duty Collected | |
|------|--|-------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| | Raw* | Exposed* | Raw | Exposed | Raw | Exposed |
| | (a) | (a) | (a) | (a) | | |
| 1927 | 75,60,724 | 75,75,087 | 3,91,636 | 14,88,818 | 4,45,634 | (b) |
| 1928 | 1,87,70,049 | 1,03,02,432 | 8,17,950 | 19,45,987 | 4,76,585 | (b) |
| 1929 | 2,00,24,529 | 1,07,37,974 | 8,23,758 | 20,06,125 | 5,05,428 | (b) |
| 1930 | 2,86,45,527 | 1,04,91,686 | 11,43,803 | 19,46,479 | 5,97,317 | (b) |
| 1931 | 2,32,56,089 | 82,75,088 | 8,99,153 | 16,12,876 | 3,29,282 | 3,69,749 |
| 1932 | 2,26,01,987 | 1,01,84,845 | 9,29,736 | 20,00,055 | 2,47,261 | 6,51,009 |
| 1933 | 3,30,64,806 | 1,02,39,175 | 14,04,796 | 24,15,247 | 3,42,947 | 8,35,264 |
| 1934 | 5,22,01,877 | 94,09,294 | 19,24,731 | 25,94,423 | 4,23,142 | 9,14,631 |
| 1935 | 6,42,65,935 | 92,76,973 | 22,87,776 | 27,00,615 | 4,96,047 | 9,42,433 |
| 1935 | 6,66,19,977 | 91,13,403 | 22,88,817 | 24,74,313 | 4,86,496 | 9,48,932 |
| 1937 | 7,02,33,845 | 1,87,45,631 | 24,52,812 | 34,77,054 | 4,84,105 | 10,11,691 |
| 1938 | 7,37,27,416 | 2,58,61,994 | 24,53,553 | 37,48,056 | 4,13,760 | 8,93,817 |

* Separately recorded from April 1927. The Imports of Cinematograph Films for the three months, January to March, 1927 are 47,53,132 L. feet valued at Rs. 6,86,556.

(a) Figures for 1927 are for the nine months, April to December 1927.

(b) Represents duty collected on 'Cinematograph Films, raw and exposed'.

Note.—As a result of the separation of Burma from British India on 1-4-1937, figures prior to that date relate to British India including Burma.

APPENDIX II

CINEMAS IN INDIA

| Circuit | Population | Cinemas |
|--|-------------|--------------------|
| 1. WESTERN CIRCUIT | | |
| (i) Bombay | 1,79,92,053 | |
| (ii) Aden | 51,478 | |
| (iii) Baroda States | 24,43,007 | |
| (iv) Bombay States | 44,68,396 | |
| (v) Western India States Agency | 39,99,250 | |
| | ----- | 2,89,54,184 230 |
| 2. CENTRAL CIRCUIT | | |
| (i) Central India States | 66,32,790 | |
| (ii) Central Provinces States | 24,83,214 | |
| (iii) Gwalior | 35,23,070 | |
| (iv) Rajputana | 1,12,25,712 | |
| (v) C. P. & Berar | 1,55,07,723 | |
| (vi) Ajmer-Merwara | 5,60,292 | |
| | ----- | 3,99,32,801 118 |
| 3. NORTH-WEST FRONTIER CIRCUIT | | |
| (i) North-West Frontier Province | 24,25,076 | |
| (ii) Sind | 38,87,070 | |
| (iii) Baluchistan | 4,63,508 | |
| (iv) Baluchistan States | 4,05,109 | |
| (v) North West Frontier (Agencies and Tribal Areas) | 22,59,288 | |
| | ----- | 94,40,051 76 |
| 4. NORTHERN CIRCUIT | | |
| (i) Punjab | 2,35,80,852 | |
| (ii) U. P. | 4,84,08,763 | |
| (iii) Kashmir & Jammu | 36,46,243 | |
| (iv) Delhi | 6,36,246 | |
| (v) Sikkim State | 1,09,808 | |
| (vi) Punjab States | 4,37,787 | |
| (vii) Punjab States Agency | 44,72,218 | |
| (viii) U. P. States | 12,06,070 | |
| | ----- | 8,24,97,987 268 |

5. EASTERN CIRCUIT

| | | | | | | | |
|-------|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------------|--------------|-----|
| (i) | Bengal | ... | ... | ... | 5,01,14,002 | | |
| (ii) | Bengal States | ... | ... | ... | 9,73,336 | | |
| (iii) | Bihar & Orissa | ... | ... | ... | 3,76,77,576 | | |
| (iv) | Bihar-Orissa States | ... | ... | ... | 46,52,007 | | |
| (v) | Assam | ... | ... | ... | 86,22,251 | | |
| (vi) | Assam States | ... | ... | ... | 6,25,606 | | |
| | | | | | <hr/> | 10,26,64,778 | 201 |

6. SOUTHERN CIRCUIT

| | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|--------------|-------------|-------|
| (i) | Madras | ... | ... | ... | 4,67,40,107 | | |
| (ii) | Madras States | ... | ... | ... | 67,54,484 | | |
| (iii) | Mysore | ... | ... | ... | 65,57,302 | | |
| (iv) | Coorg | ... | ... | ... | 1,63,327 | | |
| (v) | Hyderabad State | ... | ... | ... | 1,44,36,148 | | |
| | | | | | <hr/> | 7,46,51,368 | 372 |
| | | | | | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | Grand Total | | | | 33,81,41,169 | 1,265 | |
| | | | | | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |

APPENDIX III **STATISTICS FOR FILMS**

*From 1928 to 1938 (both the years inclusive)
for Bombay Presidency.*

| Year. | Indian Films. | | Foreign Films. | | Grand Total. |
|-------|---------------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| | Dramas. | Topicals and Side Reels. | Dramas. | Topicals and Side Reels. | |
| 1928 | 99 | 60 | 337 | 630 | 1126 |
| 1929 | 126 | 33 | 389 | 598 | 1146 |
| 1930 | 164 | 25 | 433 | 676 | 1298 |
| 1931 | 203 | 60 | 272 | 663 | 1198 |
| 1932 | 125 | 33 | 176 | 548 | 882 |
| 1933 | 127 | 23 | 235 | 718 | 1103 |
| 1934 | 146 | 55 | 224 | 731 | 1156 |
| 1935 | 188 | 30 | 202 | 829 | 1249 |
| 1936 | 147 | 40 | 208 | 849 | 1244 |
| 1937 | 131 | 42 | 227 | 714 | 1114 |
| 1938 | 105 | 66 | 221 | 798 | 1190 |

STATISTICS FOR FILMS

For the year 1939 (January to June) for Bombay Presidency.

| Month | Indian Films | | Foreign Films | | Total |
|----------|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|-------|
| | Dramas | Side Reels | Dramas | Side Reels | |
| January | 12 | 5 | 22 | 73 | 112 |
| February | 5 | 4 | 21 | 87 | 117 |
| March | 8 | 3 | 15 | 69 | 95 |
| April | 9 | 6 | 21 | 51 | 87 |
| May | 10 | 2 | 22 | 119 | 153 |
| June | 7 | 6 | 23 | 98 | 134 |

APPENDIX IV

Analysis of INDIAN FEATURE FILMS according to Languages

| Name of Language | | | | | 1936 | 1937 | 1938 |
|------------------|------------|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|
| 1. | HINDUSTANI | ... | ... | ... | 142 | 102 | 96 |
| 2. | MARATHI | ... | ... | ... | 6 | 11 | 12 |
| 3. | TAMIL | ... | ... | ... | 38 | 35 | 42 |
| 4. | TELUGU | ... | ... | ... | 12 | 9 | 11 |
| 5. | BENGALI | ... | ... | ... | 19 | 18 | 19 |
| 6. | PUNJABI | ... | ... | ... | 1 | — | 1 |
| 7. | MALAYALAM | ... | ... | ... | — | — | 1 |
| 8. | KANARESE | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 3 | — |
| 9. | GUJARATHI | ... | ... | ... | 3 | — | — |
| 10. | OORIYA | ... | ... | ... | 1 | — | — |
| 11. | PERSIAN | ... | ... | ... | 1 | — | — |
| | | | | | 224 | 178 | 182 |

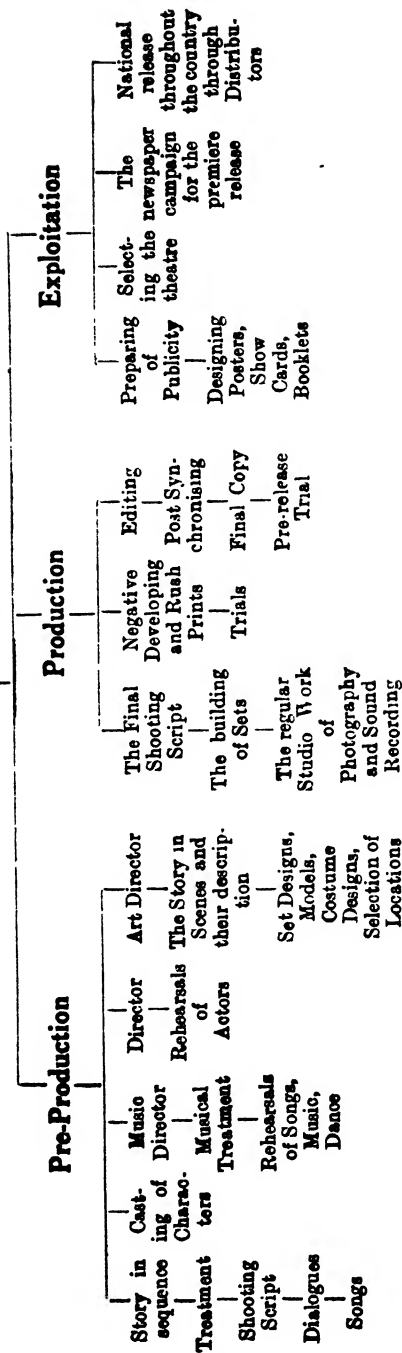
APPENDIX V

THE PICTURE IN PRODUCTION

Literary Department chooses the story

Management approves

Director selects



APPENDIX VI

LIST OF CINEMAS

Western Circuit

(Maharashtra, Gujerat, Kathiawar, Kanara)

| <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ahmedabad | Baroda—contd. | Bombay—contd. |
| Central | Pratap Vijay | Bharat Mata |
| Cinema de France | Prince | Broadway |
| English | Barsi | Capitol |
| Grand | Arun | Central |
| Krishna | Bharat | Crown |
| Sunday | Barwani | Derby |
| Model | Ranjit | Diamond |
| Novelty | Bassein | Edward |
| Pratap | Bassein | Eros |
| Regal | Laxmi Vijaya | Excelsior |
| Rosy | Beawar | Garrison |
| Saraswati | Prabhat | Hind Mata |
| Prakash | Royal | Hurricane |
| Ahmednagar | Belgaum (City) | Imperial |
| Mohan | Huns | Kohinoor |
| Prabhat | Ritz | Krishna |
| Regimental (York) | Belgaum (Cantt.) | Lamington |
| Sarosh | Globe | Majestic |
| Amreli | Shalimar | Minerva |
| Globe | Bhavnagar | Mohan |
| Anjar | Novelty | Metro |
| Ranjit | Sagar | Nishat |
| Ankleswar | Star | Novelty |
| Prince | Mohan | Palace |
| Bagalkot | Bhuj (Cutch) | Paradise |
| Sri Baswaraj | Kalapi | Pathe |
| Chitra Mandir | Bhimdi | Plaza |
| Krishna | India | Radio |
| Banswara | Bijapur | Raghuvir |
| Royal Opera | Laxmi | Regal |
| Bantwa | Jayashree | Rex |
| Kohinoor | Tripur Sundari | Roshan |
| Baramati | Bilimora | Roxy |
| Shyam | Moti | Royal |
| Baroda | BOMBAY | Royal Opera House |
| Lakshmi | Alfred | Shirin |
| Mohan | Alexandra | Silver |
| Supreme | Apollo (Surya) | Star |

Station and Cinema**Bombay—Contd.**

Super

Venus

West End

Broach

Saraswati

Bulsar

Picture Palace

Cambay

Prince Jafferli

Sri

Cuncoiin

Cine Ideal

Dabhoi

Majestic

Dahanu

Lila

Deolali

Garrison

Dharwar

Regal

Dhrangadhra

Talkie

Dhond

Krishna

Dhoraji

Aftab

Dohad

Globe

Sidpuri

Gadag

Arun

Bharat

Mahalakshmi

Godhra

Roshan

Laxmi

Gokak

Babies

Gondal

Central

Haregaon

New Shivaji

Hubli

Deccan

Mallikarjun

Sudarshan

Station and Cinema**Ichalkaranji**

Sri Narayan

Igatpuri

Laxmi

Ilkal

Basweshwar

Islampur

Anand

Jamkhandi

Capitol

Jamnagar

New Digvijaya

Ranjit

Jetpur

Radio

Jetpur Cinema

Junagadh

Central

Royal

Kadi

Shri Krishna

Kalghatgi

Dattatraya

Kalol

Krishna

Kalyan

Krishna

Karad

Prabhat

Royal

Kirkee

Excelsior

Karwar

Samarth

Kolhapur

Capitol

Rajaram

Royal

Venus

Kopargaon

Prabhat

Kurla

Model

Kutiana

Gulzar

West End

Station and Cinema**Mahad**

Gandhi

Mahim

Mahim

Ruby

Malwan

Saraswati

Mandvi (Cutch)

Azad

Kalapi

Mangrol

New Mangrol

Manmad

Godavari

Royal

Mapaca

Dasaratha

Ram

Mehsana

New Laxmi

Margao

Cine Republica

Minerva

Miraj

Madhav

Morvi

Royal

Nadiad

Prabhat

Laxmi

Nasik

Circle

Madhukar

Vijayanand

Navsari

Vasant

Nipani

Prabhat

Nova Goa

Cine-Theatre-Na-

cional

Pandharpur

Akbar

New Akbar

Panval

Ratan

| <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Patan</i> | <i>Ratnagiri</i> | <i>Surat</i> —contd |
| Saraswati | Lata | New Super |
| <i>Patlad</i> | <i>Ranibennur</i> | New Laxmi |
| Golden | Babies | Palace |
| Arjan | <i>Sangli</i> | Prakash |
| <i>Poona</i> | Anand | Venus |
| Apollo (New) | Sadasukh | <i>Thana</i> |
| Aryan | Jayshree | Laxmi |
| Connought | <i>Satara</i> | <i>Vapi</i> |
| Capitol | Anand | Moti |
| Paramount | Krishna | Vapi |
| Deccan | Chitra Mandir | <i>Vasco da Gama</i> |
| Empire | <i>Sawantwadi</i> | Cine Vasco |
| Globe | Sudershan | <i>Veraval</i> |
| Krishna | <i>Sholapur</i> | Gulshan |
| Minerva | Bhagvat Chitra | <i>Viramgam</i> |
| Prabhat | Mandii | Majestic |
| Rainbow | Prabhat | Prabhat |
| Vasant | Saraswati | <i>Wadhwan</i> |
| West End | Saraswati (New) | Mahalaxmi |
| <i>Porbunder</i> | <i>Sidhapur</i> | Vijaya |
| Newton | Sidhapur | <i>Wankaner</i> |
| <i>Rajkot</i> | <i>Sirsi</i> | Krishna |
| Capitol | Basweshwar | <i>Yeola</i> |
| Newton | <i>Surat</i> | Shri Krishna |
| <i>Rander</i> | Mohan | <i>Vantulu Sorath</i> |
| Empire | Moti | Union |

Stations : 100 ;

Cinemas : 230

Central Circuit

(C. P.—C. I., Berar, Khandesh, Rajputana)

| | | |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <i>Ajmer</i> | <i>Alwar</i> | <i>Basim</i> |
| Regal | Jagat | Diamond |
| Capitol | Paradise | <i>Betul</i> |
| Majestic | <i>Amalner</i> | New Manohar |
| <i>Akola</i> | Tamboli | <i>Bhilsa</i> |
| Krishna | Nazir | Crescent |
| Prabhat | <i>Amraoti</i> | <i>Bhopal</i> |
| New Plaza | Prabhat | Imperial |
| Pratap | Raj Kamal | Bhopal Talkies |
| <i>Akot</i> | Saroj | <i>Bhusawal</i> |
| Satyavijaya | <i>Arvi</i> | Linda |
| | Narsing | Shri Ram |

| <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Bhussawal</i> —contd. | <i>Gwalior</i> | <i>Malkapur</i> |
| Prabhat | Capitol | Gajanan |
| <i>Bikaner</i> | Central | Hanuman |
| Ganga | Chitra | <i>Mhow</i> |
| <i>Bilaspur</i> | <i>Harda</i> | Motimahal |
| Nadam | Vimal | <i>Nagpur</i> |
| Sapre | <i>Hinganghat</i> | Saroj |
| <i>Buldana</i> | Kailas | Maha Laxmi |
| Diamond | <i>Husangabad</i> | Narsing |
| <i>Burhanpur</i> | Vindhya | Palace |
| Prakash | <i>Indore</i> | Prakash |
| <i>Chalisgaon</i> | Crown | Regent |
| Usha | Krishna | <i>Nandurbar</i> |
| Shri Ram | Prabhat | Kohinoor |
| Victoria | Regal | <i>Ncemuch</i> |
| <i>Chanda</i> | <i>Jaipur</i> | George |
| Sulochana | Man Prakash | <i>Pachora</i> |
| Desai | <i>Jalgaon</i> | Krishna |
| <i>Chhindwara</i> | Natwar | Shri Ramdas |
| Patni Picture House | Datta | <i>Pusad</i> |
| Prakash | <i>Jabra</i> | Narsing |
| <i>Chopada</i> | Prakash | <i>Raigarh</i> |
| Hitale Anwar | <i>Jubbulpore</i> | Sapre |
| Prabhat | Empire | <i>Raipur</i> |
| <i>Champa</i> | Laxmi | Sapre |
| Mohan | Shyam | Babulal |
| <i>Dewas</i> | Gulab | <i>Rajnandgaon</i> |
| Nagarniwas (Sr.) | <i>Jodhpur</i> | Sapre |
| Martand (Jr.) | Empire | Mahalaxmi |
| <i>Dhamtari</i> | Krishna | <i>Rattam</i> |
| Sharda Bros. | <i>Junnerdeo</i> | Sharda |
| <i>Dharangaon</i> | Shahi | Lodendra |
| Royal | <i>Karanja</i> | <i>Sahada</i> |
| <i>Dhulia</i> | Laxmi | Shambhu |
| Bombay | <i>Katni</i> | Gloria |
| Prabhakar | Sapre Godbole | <i>Saugor</i> |
| Raj Kamal | <i>Khamgaon</i> | Shiv } Union |
| <i>Damoh</i> | Gajanan | Manohar } Union |
| Rama | Mohan | Radha Krishna |
| <i>Digras</i> | <i>Khandwa</i> | <i>Sindheda</i> |
| Krishna | Anand | Vijaya |
| <i>Drug</i> | Prakash | <i>Seoni</i> |
| Sapre | <i>Kotah</i> | Patni Picture |
| <i>Gondia</i> | Chand | House |
| Ganesh | Kohinoor | <i>Udaipur</i> |
| Ram | | Ganesh |

| Station and Cinema | Station and Cinema | Station and Cinema |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Ujjain</i> | <i>Wardha</i> | <i>Wun</i> |
| Paramount | Durga | Krishna |
| Narsingh | Om Gajanan | <i>Yeotmal</i> |
| | | Arthur |

Stations : 65 ;

Cinemas : 118

North-West Frontier Circuit

(Sind and Baluchistan)

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Dadu</i> | <i>Karachi—contd.</i> | <i>Shikarpur</i> |
| Prabhat | Rama Picture House | Harivalab |
| <i>Fort Sandeman</i> | Regal | Capitol |
| Dayal | Star | <i>Sukkur</i> |
| <i>Hyderabad (Sind)</i> | Taj Mahal | Imperial |
| Jagat Talkies | <i>Khairpur Mirs</i> | Minerva |
| Capitol | G. A. Murar | <i>Shahdadpur</i> |
| Roxy | <i>Kotri</i> | Laxmi |
| Majestic | Regal | <i>Shahdadkot</i> |
| Prabhat | <i>Larkana</i> | Palace |
| <i>Jacobabad</i> | Prabhat | <i>Tando-Adam</i> |
| Shankar | Royal | Prabhat |
| Capitol | Empire | <i>Tando Allahyar</i> |
| <i>Karachi</i> | <i>Loralai</i> | Capitol |
| Capitol | Murtaza | <i>Tando Mohmadkhan</i> |
| Empire | <i>Mirpurkhas</i> | Indus |
| Imperial | Capitol | <i>Ratodero</i> |
| Jagdish | Prabhat | Krishna |
| Keamari | Mohan | <i>Quetta</i> |
| Palace (New) | <i>Matli</i> | Capitol |
| Plaza | Majestic | Prabhat |
| Picture House | <i>Nawabshah</i> | Prem |
| Prabhat | Pratap | Regal |
| Rama Talkies | | New Empire |

(N. W. Frontier Province)

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Abbotabad</i> | <i>Dera I. Khan</i> | <i>Mardan</i> |
| Royal | Imperial | Amrit |
| New Empire | Royal Capitol | <i>Murree</i> |
| <i>Bannu</i> | <i>Haripur Hazara</i> | Capitol |
| Frontier | Coronation | Lansdowne |
| Royal Capitol | <i>Kohat</i> | <i>Nowshera</i> |
| <i>Campbellpur</i> | New Royal | Capitol |
| New Kumar | <i>Landikotal</i> | Regal |
| <i>Cheirat</i> | Capitol | |
| Capitol | | |

| <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Peshawar (Cantt.)</i> | <i>Rawalpindi</i> | <i>Razmak</i> |
| Capitol | Capitol | Razmak |
| New Lansdowne | Lansdowne | <i>Risalpur</i> |
| <i>Peshawar (City)</i> | Rose | Royal |
| Picture House | New Rose | |
| White House | Imperial | |
| Imperial | Laxmi Talkies | |
| Nishat | Regimental | |

Stations : 36 ; Cinemas : 76

Northern Circuit

(Punjab, U. P., Kashmir and Delhi)

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Abohar</i> | <i>Ambala (Cantt.)</i> | <i>Batala</i> |
| Gian | Capitol | New Palace |
| <i>Agra</i> | Kailash | <i>Benares</i> |
| Jaswant | New Royal | Chitra |
| Krishna | Nishat | Nishat Talkies |
| Prabhat | Prabhat | Kashi Talkies |
| <i>Ahmedpur East</i> | Regal | Vishwanath |
| Prince | <i>Amritsar</i> | <i>Bhatinda</i> |
| <i>Allahabad</i> | Amrit | Novelty |
| Moti Mahal | Pearl | <i>Bhiwani</i> |
| Jawahar | Rialto | Murari |
| Palace | Royal | <i>Budaun</i> |
| Niranjan | <i>Aznagarh</i> | Jubilee |
| Prem | Novelty | Pratap |
| Paradise | <i>Bahawalpur</i> | <i>Buland Shahr</i> |
| Prabhat | Sadiq | Fairy Talkies |
| <i>Aligarh</i> | <i>Bahraich</i> | <i>Cawnpore (City)</i> |
| Pearl | Pearl Talkies | Nishat Talkies |
| Ruby | <i>Balarampur</i> | Imperial |
| <i>Almora</i> | Laxmi Talkies | Central |
| Capitol | <i>Banda</i> | Gopal |
| Prabhat | Krishna | Golden |
| Mohan | Prakash | Prakash |
| Roxy | <i>Bareilly</i> | Moti |
| <i>Amroha</i> | Novelty | Nishat |
| Plaza | Imperial | Regal |
| Talata | Bareilly Picture | <i>Cawnpore (Cantt.)</i> |
| <i>Ambala (City)</i> | House | Elphinstone |
| Royal | <i>Barnala</i> | Federal |
| Novelty | Prem | Astor |
| | <i>Basti</i> | <i>Dagshahi</i> |
| | Sunder Talkies | Regimental |

| Station and Cinema | Station and Cinema | Station and Cinema |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Dalhousie</i> | <i>Ferozepore (Cantt.)</i> | <i>Hoshiarpur</i> |
| Plaza Talkies | Memorial | Radio Talkies |
| Selwyn | Plaza | Friend Talkies |
| <i>Dehra Dun</i> | <i>Ferozabad</i> | <i>Jammu</i> |
| New Empire | Central Talkies | Hari |
| Theatre | <i>Fatehpur</i> | Uttam Theatre |
| Orient | King Talkies | <i>Jaunpur</i> |
| Nishat | <i>Fyzabad</i> | Prem Talkies |
| Odeon | Paradise | <i>Jhang (Maghiana)</i> |
| <i>Delhi</i> | Regimental | Tabassam |
| Imperial | Majestic | <i>Jhansi</i> |
| Amar | <i>Gazipur</i> | Prabhat Talkies |
| Jagat Talkies | Central | Sipri |
| Jubilee | Regal | <i>Jhelum</i> |
| Kamal | <i>Gharial</i> | New Jhelum |
| Majestic | Capitol | <i>Jullendar</i> |
| Novelty | <i>Gojra</i> | Royal |
| Excelsior | Imperial | Hari |
| Picture House | <i>Gonda</i> | Lintot's |
| Roxy | Vinod | Wellington |
| Sangam | <i>Gorakhpur</i> | <i>Jaranwala</i> |
| West End | Jubilee | Manohar Talkies |
| Capitol | Nishat | <i>Kapurthala</i> |
| Plaza | <i>Gujrat</i> | Jagatjit |
| Regal | Majestic | <i>Karnal</i> |
| Ritz | <i>Gujranwala</i> | Karnal |
| New Royal | Prakash | Novelty |
| <i>Dera Gazi Khan</i> | Regent | <i>Kasauli</i> |
| Coronation | <i>Gurdaspur</i> | White |
| Prabhat | Upper Indus Golden | <i>Kasgunj</i> |
| <i>Dera Nawabsha</i> | Talkies | Prabhat |
| Prince | <i>Haldwani</i> | <i>Kasur</i> |
| <i>Dharamsala</i> | New Krishna | Majestic |
| Himalaya | New Coronation | <i>Khanpur</i> |
| <i>Etawah</i> | <i>Hardwar</i> | Panjnad |
| King Talkies | New Central | <i>Khanewal</i> |
| <i>Fazilka</i> | <i>Hansi</i> | Radhu |
| Imperial | Surya | <i>Kheri (Lakhimpur)</i> |
| <i>Faridkot</i> | <i>Hathras</i> | Krishna |
| Jubilee | Crown | <i>Khurja</i> |
| <i>Farukhabad</i> | Maya | Laxmi |
| Central | Sri Ram | <i>Lahore (Cantt.)</i> |
| <i>Ferozepore (City)</i> | <i>Hapur</i> | Globe |
| Simla | Prem | <i>Lahore (City)</i> |
| Nishat | <i>Hissar</i> | Capitol |
| Pioneer | Harihar | Crown |

| <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Lahore (City) —contd. | Mirali | Orai |
| Diamond | Frontier Theatres, | Orai Talkies |
| Jubilee | Ltd. | Pakapatam |
| King | Mirzapur | Radhu |
| Laxmi | Diamond | Pattoki |
| Naulakha | Moga | Dilbahar Talkies |
| Jaswant | Amrit | Pathankot |
| Nishat | Montgomery | Empire Theatre |
| Palace | Prabhat | Patiala |
| Minerva | Moradabad | Krishna |
| Plaza | Novelty | Royal |
| Prabhat | Imperial | Pilibhit |
| Regal | Nishat | Novelty |
| Ritz | E. I. Rly. Cinema | Qilashekhupura |
| Golden Talkies | Muksar | Regal |
| Lucknow (City) | Imperial | Raibareilly |
| Nishat | Multan | Prabhat Talkies |
| Royal | Imperial | Prabhu |
| Lucknow (Cantt.) | New Crown | Pratap |
| Elphistone | Nur | Rahimyar Khan |
| Regal | Radhu | Friends |
| Roxy | Golden | Ramnagar |
| Y. M. C. A. | Mussoorie | Royal |
| Loralai | Jubilee | Rampur |
| Murtaza Talkies | Paramount Theatre | Coronation |
| Ludhiana | Roxy | Ranikhat |
| Batta | Rialto | Royal |
| Raikhya | Muttra | Globe |
| Naulakha | Novelty | Rink |
| Lyallpur | Palace | Rewari |
| Nishat | Mandi | Majestic |
| Regal | Mandi Talkies | Rohtak |
| Mandi Bahuddin | Muzaffargarh | Universal |
| Bahuddin | Rajmahal | Roorkee |
| Meerut (City) | Muzaffarnagar | Roorkee Talkies |
| Central | Chitra | Sirsa |
| Novelty | Royal | Mahabir Talkies |
| Plaza | Nabha | Sabatlu |
| Nishat | Royal | Cantonment |
| Royal | Nainital | Saharanpur |
| Meerut (Cantt.) | Roxy Theatre | Empire |
| Prabhat | Picture Palace | Novelty |
| Picture | Narnaul | Venus |
| R. A. | Vishnu Talkies | Sargodha |
| Mianwali | Okara | Prem |
| Bahadur | Radhu | |

| <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Sahajahanpur</i> | <i>Simla</i> —contd. | <i>Sultanpur</i> |
| Majestic | Prince of Wales | Prakash |
| <i>Sheikhpura</i> | Roxy | <i>Tank</i> |
| Regal | <i>Sitapur</i> | Frontier Theatres, |
| <i>Sialkot</i> | Empire | Ltd. |
| New Crown | Govind | <i>Wazirabad</i> |
| New Pearl | <i>Solon</i> | Prem |
| Capitol | Novelty | <i>Rewani</i> |
| Worcestershire | <i>Srinagar</i> | Majestic |
| <i>Simla</i> | Palladium | Nandkumar Talkies |
| Elphinstone | Regal | <i>Wana</i> |
| Morris | <i>Sunam</i> | Frontier Theatres, |
| Plaza | Krishna | Ltd. |

Stations : 126 ;

Cinemas : 268

Eastern Circuit

(Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam)

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Adra</i> | <i>Berhampore</i> | <i>Calcutta</i> —contd. |
| European Institute | Meera | Chhaya |
| <i>Amta</i> | Suchitra Cinema | Chhabighar |
| Nobin | <i>Bettiah</i> | Chitra |
| Chandi Show House | Royal | City Cinema |
| <i>Andul</i> | <i>Bhagalpur</i> | Chitrapuri |
| Andul Show House | Picture Palace | Ganesh |
| <i>Arrah</i> | <i>Bhavanipur</i> | Globe |
| Mohan Cinema | Express | Majestic |
| <i>Asansol</i> | <i>Bogra</i> | Metro |
| New Cinema | Uttara Cinema Co., | Motimahal |
| Paramount Cinema | Ltd. | New Cinema |
| E. I. Institute | Marina Talkies | New Imperial |
| New Empire | <i>Bhatpara</i> | National Talkies |
| Lily | Chhabighar | New Royal |
| <i>Bankura</i> | <i>Belliaghata</i> | Park Show House |
| Binapani Picture | Robin Talkies | Plaza |
| Basanti | <i>Budge Budge</i> | Purna Theatre |
| <i>Barisal</i> | Queen | Prabhat Cinema |
| Dipali Chaya | <i>Burdwan</i> | Strand Talkies |
| Mandir | Burdwan Cinema | The Light House |
| Jagadish | <i>Calcutta</i> | First Empire |
| <i>Barrackpore</i> | Aleya | The New Empire |
| New Cinema | Intally Talkie | Roxy Cinema |
| Regimental | House | Paradise |
| <i>Behala</i> | Bharat Laxmi | Regimental Cinema |
| Suchitra | Bijoli | Regal |

| <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Calcutta—contd. | Dacca (Cantt.) | Ghatsila |
| Taj Mahal | Dorset | Welfare |
| Rupbani | Darbhanga | Girithi |
| Rupam Rupakatha | Prakash | Moti Picture Palace |
| Taswir Mahal | Darjeeling | Indian Institute |
| Uttra Show House | Capitol | Baniadih Talkie |
| Ruby Cinema | Plaza | Hazaribag |
| Talkie Show | Digboy | Mohan Talkies |
| Shree | Digboy Club | Howrah |
| Chandpur | Deoghar | Bangabasi Cinema |
| Chandpur Cinema | Prapulla Cinema | Nava Bharat Cinema |
| Chhayabani | Dhanbad | Imphal |
| Chandranagore | E. I. Rly. Institute | Manipur |
| Cinema de France | (Indian) | Jalpaiguri |
| Shree Durga | E. I. Railway „ | New Chitrali |
| Channmohani | (European) | Maya Picture Palace |
| Joyland Carnival | Dhubri | Jumalpur |
| Chinsura | Maya Mahal | European Inst. |
| Rupali Cinema | Dibrugarh | Indian Inst. |
| Chittagong | Aurora Kinema | Jamshedpur |
| Jubilee | Great Eastern | Jamshedpur Talkies |
| Lion | Cinema | Regal |
| Palace | Dinajpur | Jessore |
| Chapra | Lily Talkies | New Cinema |
| Krishna | Dinapur | Jharia |
| Laxmi | Aishmahal | Deshbandhu |
| Coochbehar | Railway Indian Inst. | Jorhat |
| Laxmi Cinema Co. | Regimental | Eleya |
| New Cinema | Dum Dum | Jorhet Club |
| Comila | Baikunthanath | Star |
| Chitrakatha | Doom Dooma | Kanknadu |
| Cuttack | Doom Dooma Club | Calcutta |
| Halmoock Talkies | Aurora Kinema | Katihar |
| Capitol Talkies | Fardipur | Shyam Talkies |
| Cossipore | Chayalok | Haradaya! Talkies |
| Novelty | Gaibhanda | Khagaul |
| Taj Mahal | Maya Talkies | Railway |
| Chakradharpur | Bharati Talkies | Kharagpur |
| Chandra Talkies | Gauhati | Bombay |
| Railway Institute | Kelvin | Aurora Kinema (Ind. |
| Dacca (City) | Shri Sathi House | Inst.) |
| Mukal Theatres | Gaya | Khulna |
| Britannia Hall | Bharat | Ullashini Cinema |
| Rupabani | Paradise | New Cinema |
| Lion | European Institute | Kidderpore |
| Paradise Theatre | Gusari | National Talkies |
| Picture House | Bombay Talkies | |

| <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Krishna-nagar</i> | <i>Mymensing</i> | <i>Serampur</i> |
| Chitra Mandir | Chhayabani Cinema | Serampur |
| Krishna Nagar | Mymensing Talkies | Shanker Talkies |
| Talkies | <i>Naihati</i> | <i>Shantipur</i> |
| <i>Kulti</i> | Ramkrishna | Laxmi Talkies |
| New Cinema | <i>Narayangunj</i> | <i>Shibpur</i> |
| <i>Kur, eong</i> | Diamond Talkies | Maya-Puri Cinema |
| New | Hansa | <i>Shillong</i> |
| Plaza | <i>Nator</i> | Kelvin Cinema |
| Star | Chhaya Talkies | Shillong Picture |
| <i>Konnagar</i> | Ram Ram Talkies | <i>Saharanpur</i> |
| Konnagar Talkies | <i>Netrakon</i> | Novelty Talkies |
| <i>Kurigram</i> | Bejoy Talkies | <i>Sitapur</i> |
| Dass Talkies | <i>Nowgong</i> | Govind Talkies |
| <i>Kalimpong</i> | Krishna Talkies | <i>Sambalpur</i> |
| Novelty Cinema | Nowgong Industries, | Chandra Cinema |
| <i>Kushthia</i> | Ltd. | <i>Silchar</i> |
| Kalyani Talkies | <i>Pabna</i> | Oriental |
| <i>Kankinarrah</i> | Aurora Kinema | Eastern Talkies |
| Calcutta Talkies | <i>Patna</i> | <i>Siliguri</i> |
| Sun Show House | Elphinstone | Imperial Talkies |
| <i>Kadamtolla</i> | Nishat Theatres | <i>Sirajgunj</i> |
| Shri Rupa Cinema | Regent | Chitrali |
| <i>Langla Sullet</i> | <i>Puri</i> | Laxmi |
| Langavalle Club | Laxmi Talkies | <i>Sylhet</i> |
| <i>Lakhinipur (North)</i> | <i>Purulia</i> | Sylhet |
| Surya Cinema | Chandra | <i>Sibsagar</i> |
| <i>Madhupur</i> | Kamala | Lakshmi Talkie |
| National Talkies | <i>Rajshahi</i> | House |
| <i>Malda</i> | Ashok | <i>Tejapore</i> |
| Laxmighar | Poornima Talkies | Janaki Cinema |
| <i>Manipur</i> | <i>Ranchi</i> | <i>Tinsukhia</i> |
| Kings | Ratan Talkies | Krishna Talkies |
| <i>Monghyr</i> | <i>Rangpur</i> | Aurora |
| New Empire | Laxmi Talkie | <i>Uttarpada</i> |
| Paramount Talkies | House | Gouri |
| <i>Motihari</i> | Oriental Talkie | <i>Vishnuapur</i> |
| The New Cinema | House | Kumari Talkie |
| <i>Muzaffarpur</i> | Royal Cinema | House |
| Shyam | <i>Salkia</i> | |
| Chitra Cinema | New Natyapeeth | |
| | Bombay Talkies | |

Stations : 111 ;

Cinemas : 201

Southern Circuit

(Madras and Nizam, Mysore, Travancore and Cochin States)

| <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Adoni</i> | <i>Bangalore (Cantt.)</i> | <i>Cham Rajanagar</i> |
| B. N. | —contd. | Sri Krishna |
| Prabhakar | Select | Laxmi Talkies |
| <i>Alandur</i> | Central | <i>Chickbalapore</i> |
| Kumaran | Laxmi | Jayachamarajendra |
| <i>Ambasamudram</i> | <i>Bangalore (City)</i> | Vani |
| Jayalaxmi | Excelsior | <i>Chickmangalur</i> |
| <i>Amalapuram</i> | Majestic | Abdulla |
| Ismail | Paramount | <i>Chidambaram</i> |
| <i>Anamalais</i> | Sagar | Natraj Talkies |
| Rajendra | Select | <i>Chintamani</i> |
| <i>Anantpur</i> | <i>Batlagunda</i> | New Gajalaxmi |
| Excelsior | Chandra Talkies | <i>Chirala</i> |
| <i>Anakappali</i> | <i>Beharampore</i> | Shri Ram Krishna |
| Gouri Shanker | Chamaria Talkies | <i>Chitaldurg (Mysore)</i> |
| <i>Andersonpet</i> | Sitaram Talkies | Channakeswar |
| K. G. F. Jubilee | <i>Bellari</i> | Talkies |
| <i>Antiyur</i> | Star | <i>Chittor</i> |
| Chellam | Krishna | Premala |
| <i>Arcot</i> | <i>Bezwada</i> | <i>Chittur (Cochin State)</i> |
| Ramalingaswami | Sri Durga Kala- | Sitaram |
| <i>Arni</i> | mandir | <i>Chetpur</i> |
| Laxmi | Sri Maruti | Bharat Mata Talkies |
| <i>Arrupukottah</i> | <i>Bhavani</i> | <i>Coondapoor</i> |
| Muthu | Palaniappa | Samarth Talkies |
| Raja | <i>Bodinayakanore</i> | Laxminarayan |
| <i>Atur</i> | Ponnu | <i>Cochin</i> |
| Lalita | <i>Calicut</i> | Paramount |
| <i>Aurangabad</i> | Crown | Regal |
| Gulzar | Radha Picture | Select |
| Sikander | Palace | <i>Coconada</i> |
| <i>Ayyampet</i> | Coronation | Crown |
| Crown | <i>Cannanore</i> | Majestic |
| <i>Annampali</i> | Rajaram | Felix |
| Pearl | Jayaram Talkies | Sri Krishna |
| <i>Bapatla</i> | <i>Challapalli</i> | <i>Coimbatore</i> |
| Sri Lalita | Saraswati | Carnatic |
| <i>Bangalore (Cantt.)</i> | <i>Champion Reef</i> | Laxmi |
| B. R. V. | Perfect | Edison |
| City Talkies | K. G. F. | Rada |
| Empire | Permanent Perfect | Palace |
| Opera | Talkies | Raja |
| Laxmi | | Hall |

| <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Conjeevaram</i> | <i>Gobichetty Palayam</i> | <i>Kadur</i> |
| Madan Talkies | Tiptop | Kadur |
| Kannan | <i>Golden Rock</i> | Sarvana Talkies |
| Golden Talkies | Rly. Institute | <i>Kottayam</i> |
| Muruga | <i>Gudivada</i> | Vijaya Talkies |
| Ganesh | Gouri Shanker | <i>Kovur</i> |
| <i>Coonoor</i> | Saraswati | City Talkies |
| Coonoor | Sreenivas | <i>Kallakurchi</i> |
| Bedford | <i>Gudivam</i> | Sridharan |
| <i>Cuddalore (N. T.)</i> | Mayura | <i>Karaikal</i> |
| Modern | <i>Gulbarga</i> | Raja |
| Muthia | Laxmi | <i>Karaikudi</i> |
| Shridhar | New Madan | Nataraj Talkies |
| Star | <i>Guntur</i> | Palaniappa Talkies |
| <i>Cuddalore (South Arcot)</i> | Bombay Talkies | Ramavilasam |
| Sridharan | Saraswati Talkies | Talkies |
| <i>Cuddapah</i> | Krishna | <i>Karimnagar</i> |
| Satyanarayan | <i>Hassan</i> | Imperial |
| Talkies | Imperial | <i>Karur</i> |
| <i>Cumbum</i> | <i>Hindupur</i> | Talkie Talk |
| Crescent Talkies | Dhanalaxmi | Varadraja Talkie |
| <i>Davangere</i> | Laxminarayan | <i>Kawali</i> |
| Dhana Laxmi | <i>Hospet</i> | Gandharva Talkies |
| Vasant | Sagar Talkies | <i>Khamnenth</i> |
| <i>Devakottah</i> | Murugar | Picture Palace |
| Saraswati | <i>Hyderabad (Deccan)</i> | <i>Kottaiyur</i> |
| <i>Dindigal</i> | Central | Annamalliar |
| Celin Talkies | Excelsior | <i>Koutaram</i> |
| Pease Talkies | Sagar | Krishna Kala |
| <i>Dharapuram</i> | Krishna | Mandir Talkies |
| Vasant | Majestic | <i>Kurnool</i> |
| <i>Dharamapuri (Salem)</i> | Select | Leela Talkies |
| Laxmi | Palace | Vijaya |
| Vishnu | Royal | <i>Kullttalai</i> |
| <i>Elampillai</i> | West End | Popular Talkies |
| Dhan Laxmi Talkies | Zamrud Mahal | <i>Kolar (Mysore)</i> |
| <i>Ellore</i> | <i>Jalna</i> | Sharda Talkies |
| Rama Krishna | Sikandar | <i>Kumbakonam</i> |
| Pandurang | Mulukraj | Diamond |
| <i>Erode</i> | <i>Hingoli</i> | Raja Talkies |
| New Carnatic | Krishna Talkies | Saraswati |
| Talkies | <i>Hanamkonda</i> | Leela |
| Nataraj | Prince Talkies | <i>Lalgudi</i> |
| <i>Ernakulam</i> | <i>Holalkere</i> | Sri Natraj |
| Menaka | Venugopal Talkies | <i>Latur (Nizam)</i> |
| Nagiah | | Lahoti |

| <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Madras | Mercara | Oorgaum—contd. |
| Broadway | Kohinoor Cinema | New Imperial |
| Crown | Masulipatam | Ootacamand |
| Chitra | Brindawan Talkies | Blue Mountain |
| Sagar Talkies | Saraswati Talkies | Assembly Hall |
| Kinema Central | Ram Krishna | Palakol |
| New Elphinstone | Talkies | Sarada |
| Chitra Talkies | Mannar | Palaghat |
| Ranga | Pankajam Talkies | Gowder Picture |
| Regal | Manipal | Palace |
| Kapali | Ramkrishna | New Theatre |
| Saraswati | Mandya | Pallavaram |
| Select Talkies | Olympia | Radhakrishna |
| Star | Mettapalayam | Palni |
| Wellington | Hajee | Jayaram |
| West End | Mudva | Pallatur |
| The Presidency | Meenakshi Sundaram | Palaniappa Talkies |
| Talkies (Paragon) | Mysore | Nidadavolu |
| Roxy | Chamundeswari | Roxy Talkies |
| Gaiety | Olympia | Palai |
| Minerva | Opera | Divine Talkies |
| Madura | Rajendra | Devi Talkies |
| City | Rehmania | Periyakulam |
| Central Talkies | Sree Krishna | Karunakar Talkies |
| Chintamani Talkies | Nagarcoil | Rahim Talkies |
| Imperial | Imperial | Puttukottai |
| New | Pioneer | Palaniappa Talkies |
| Select | Nanded | Panruti |
| Meenakshi | Azim | Shanmuganand |
| Sundaram Talkies | Sadanand | Paramakudi |
| Silver Jubilee | Negapattam | Kohinoor |
| Madurantakam | Universal | Parbhani |
| Krishna Picture | Ram Krishna | Globe |
| Palace | Nellikupam | Parvatipuram |
| Mandanapalli | Central | Chandramouleswar |
| Cine Art Enterprise | Nellore | Peddapuram |
| Krishna Talkies | New Talkie Picture | Somaraja Talkies |
| Mandapetta | Vinayak Palace | Pennadam |
| Ramkrishna | Nizamabad | Muthukumar |
| Mangalore | Sri Krishna | Pennugonda |
| Chitra | Nuzwid | Sri Krishna Talkies |
| Krishna | Venkateswar | Pithapuram |
| Mannargudi | Oorgaum | Hanuman |
| Lakshmi | Central | Pollachi |
| Mayavaram | Gay | Chellam |
| Sundaram | Jubilee | Narayan Talkies |
| | Mysore | |

| Station and Cinema | Station and Cinema | Station and Cinema |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Pondicherry | Salur—contd. | Tiruchendur |
| Commercial Cinema | Parmeshwari | Popular |
| Pudukottah | Talkies | Tirukoilur |
| Gaiety | Saidapet | Sivakami Sundari |
| Laxmi | Joice Talkies | Tirupati |
| Vest | Secunderabad | Raghu Ramchandra |
| Produttur | British | Tirupattur |
| Chamaria Talkies | Garrison | Meenakshi |
| Swami Talkies | Imperial | Sri Devi |
| Quilon | Manohar | Tirupur |
| Swami | Rajeswari | Gajalaxmi |
| Rajahmundry | Rex | Universal |
| Hanuman | Rivoli | Tiruburapundi |
| Krishna Picture | Tivoli | Sundaram |
| Palace | Shimoga | Tiruvadi |
| Venkateswara | Krishna | Murugananda |
| Talkies | Shiyali | Tiruvapur |
| Rajapalayam | Sundaram | Meenakshi |
| Raja Talkies | Sompeta | Rialto |
| Ranchandrapuram | Narasimha | Tiruvannamalai |
| Venkateswar | Srirangam | Meenakshi |
| Rameswaram | Rangavilas Talkies | Tiruvottiyur |
| Sri Nambu | Devi | Balkrishna |
| Ramnad | Tadepalligudem | Tiruvottipuram |
| Ramnathan | Subbaraya | Laxmi |
| Ranipet | Tadpatri | Trichinopoly (City) |
| Kannan | Vasant Talkies | Gaiety |
| Rasipuram | Sri Jain | Wellington |
| Saraswati Talkies | Tanjore | Paramount |
| Rayadurg | Meenakshi | Ramkrishna |
| Dhanalaxmi | Rajaram | Trichinopoly (Cantt.) |
| Rayavaram | Tanuku | Ramkrishna |
| Nuljanna | Chillori | Rangavilas |
| Razole | Tenali | Regal |
| Krishna Talkies | Satyanarayan | Trichur |
| Reballe | Venkateshwar | Jos Theatre |
| Sri Krishna | Tindivanam | Rama Varma |
| Raichur | Krishna | Theatre |
| Laxmi | Gaja Laxmi | Trivellore |
| Noori Talkies | Tenkasi | Royal Talkies |
| Salem | Gowri | Golden Rock (Trichi) |
| Central | Royal | South Indian Rly. |
| Oriental | Tennevelly | Institute |
| New Oriental | Palace de Vales | Trimulghery |
| Sundaram | Tirurधिpuram | Garrison |
| Salur | Laxmi Talkies | |
| Mani Talkies | | |

| <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Trivandram</i> | <i>Vaniyanbadi</i> | <i>Vriddhachalam</i> |
| Reddiar Talkies | Blue Bird Talkies | Kamakshee |
| New Talkies | <i>Vellore</i> | <i>Waltair</i> |
| Sri Chitra | Opera | Waltair |
| <i>Tumkur</i> | Roxy | <i>Wandiwash</i> |
| Krishna | Taj Mahal | Raj Laxmi |
| Raja | <i>Villupuram</i> | Garrison |
| Shimoga | Royyan Talkies | <i>Warangal</i> |
| <i>Tuticorin</i> | <i>Virudhunagar</i> | Globe |
| Laxmi Kanth | Liberty | Parbhani |
| <i>Udamalpet</i> | Rada | Prince |
| Jubilee | <i>Vizagapatam</i> | <i>Wellington</i> |
| Saraswati | Light House | Garrison |
| <i>Udipi</i> | Poorna | <i>Yadgiri</i> |
| National | Select | Bansilal |
| <i>Uttamapalayam</i> | Bharat Laxmi | <i>Yellamanchili</i> |
| Poonu | Sri Krishna | Laxmi |

Stations : 199 ;

Cinemas : 372

Burma

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| <i>Akyab</i> | <i>Mohuyin</i> | <i>Rangoon</i> |
| Akyab | Touring | Dossani |
| <i>Alon</i> | <i>Monywa</i> | Excelsior |
| Touring | Touring | Gaiety |
| <i>Basscin</i> | <i>Moulmein</i> | Globe |
| Raphael | Bandoola | Kings |
| <i>Katha</i> | King | Manek Mahal |
| Touring | Empire | Palladium |
| <i>Letpadam</i> | Regal | Pathe |
| Touring | <i>Mudon</i> | Odeon |
| <i>Madauk</i> | Touring | Royal |
| Touring | <i>Muyanano</i> | Dagon |
| <i>Mandalay</i> | Touring | Sher Hall |
| Elphinstone | <i>Myingyan</i> | <i>Sagain</i> |
| New Ratabon | Touring | Touring |
| <i>Manbin</i> | <i>Myithyina</i> | <i>Shwebo</i> |
| Touring | Touring | Touring |
| <i>Maymyo</i> | <i>Pegu</i> | <i>Thaton</i> |
| Empire | Wazir | Touring |
| Rialto | <i>Prome</i> | <i>Thazi</i> |
| Regal | Crown | Touring |
| <i>Meiktila</i> | <i>Port Blair</i> | <i>Toungoo</i> |
| Touring | Imperial Talkies | King |
| <i>Maguung</i> | | <i>Wuntho</i> |
| Touring | | Touring |

| <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> | <i>Station and Cinema</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Yinmelhim</i> | <i>Namtu</i> | <i>Tavoy</i> |
| Touring | British Burma | Universal |
| <i>Yinmabin</i> | New Empire | <i>Lashio</i> |
| Touring | Pratap | Royal |
| <i>Yenangyuag</i> | Globe Talkies | <i>Taunggyi</i> |
| Apollo | | Taunggyi |

Ceylon

| | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| <i>Batticaloa</i> | <i>Kandy</i> | <i>Colombo</i> |
| Touring | Empire | Regal |
| <i>Badulla</i> | Wembley | Majestic |
| Kings | <i>Kurunegala</i> | Empire |
| <i>Galle</i> | Touring | New Olympia |
| Queens | <i>Nawara Eliya</i> | Elphinstone |
| <i>Hatton</i> | Clifford Pavilion | Capitol |
| Princess | <i>Ratnapura</i> | Gaiety |
| <i>Jaffna</i> | Touring | Tower |
| Regal | <i>Trincomalee</i> | Gintupitiya |
| Windsor | Nelson's | Plaza |

Imperial Touring Talkies with the exception of Batticaloa, Kurunegala and Ratnapura have another seven to eight Touring sets that go round the island, about a month in each small town or village.

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